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MARY'S GARDEN
AND HOW IT GREW

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
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MARY'S GARDEN AND HOW IT GREW

BY

FRANCES DUNCAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Mr. Trommel's Assistant	3
II	The Assistant at Work	11
III	Planting in Boxes	17
IV	Crocuses and the Snowdrop	26
V	Making Cuttings	33
VI	Beginning the Garden	38
VII	Planting Sweet Peas	45
VIII	Making a Rose Garden	56
IX	Waiting for the Sweet Peas	66
X	Planting	75
XI	Making the Summer-House	84
XII	Mary Learns Pruning	93
XIII	A New Idea	106
XIV	The Horticultural Club	112
XV	Setting Out Privet Cuttings	124

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVI	Mr. Trommel Visits the Gardens	132
XVII	Setting Out Seedlings	145
XVIII	Mary in Mr. Trommel's Garden	149
XIX	Transactions of the Horticultural Club	156
XX	The Poppies	164
XXI	The Club in Mary's Garden	170
XXII	When Mary was in the Country	182
XXIII	Mr. Trommel Teaches the Art of Budding	187
XXIV	Transplanting Perennials	195
XXV	The Flower Show	204
XXVI	Setting Out Bulbs	215
XXVII	Bulbs for the Window-Garden	225
XXVIII	The Window-Garden	230
XXIX	Planting Trees	235
XXX	Making a Compost Heap	250
XXXI	Putting the Garden to Sleep	257

MARY'S GARDEN
AND HOW IT GREW

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

MARY'S GARDEN AND HOW IT GREW

CHAPTER I

1807

MR. TROMMEL'S ASSISTANT

[December]

IF you had looked out of a south window of the Maxwell house the day after Christmas, you would have seen a little figure hurrying along the path to the side gate, the brown curls bobbing vigorously up and down with the exertion.

Mr. Maxwell was looking out of the window, watching the small figure which was making such a bee-line toward the little house with the roof all peaks and gables, the long glass house at the side, just across the road from the Maxwells' side gate. "Going over to see old Trommel, I suppose," he said, turning to his wife, with a laugh. "We 'll have

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a gardener in the family if we 're not careful, Helen; but I see a glimmer of hope for your rubber-plant."

"We certainly need a gardener," responded she. "But you need n't laugh at my rubber-plant. You know perfectly well, Roger Maxwell, that you could n't make even a rubber-plant grow if you sat and fanned it all day. I only hope she does n't bother dear old Peter," Mrs. Maxwell added, as the child disappeared behind the greenhouse door.

But Herr Peter Trommel, gardener, horticulturist, retired florist, and above all *Switzer*, was not in the least bothered. He was standing at the far end of the long greenhouse, a pile of soil on the bench in front of him, busily potting plants—an old man, very short, very broad, with a thick bush of beard.

"Mr. Trommel, Mr. Trommel!" called a joyous little voice as the door opened. The old man turned around.

"Ha! That is mine young assistant!" he exclaimed, beaming through his spectacles at the small visitor.

"I brought over your present, Mr. Trommel, and I liked that 'most the best of anything, except Evan-

geline. Suppose I put it on. Would n't you like to have me help you?" she said coaxingly as she unrolled a diminutive gardener's apron, made of blue denim, just like the one Mr. Trommel had tied about his capacious person.

"Yes, yes," agreed Herr Trommel; "I am in need of assistance. But hang up your coat and hat, little one; they must not drop on the floor, for it is dirt."

Mary hung up coat and hat, took off her rubbers, and then put the strap of the apron over her head and pulled out the curls that were caught underneath it.

"My strings come around in front and tie just like yours," she said, proudly; then rolled up her sleeves above her elbows in faithful imitation of Mr. Trommel's shirt-sleeves.

"*Prachtvoll!*" declared Mr. Trommel. "Now you are a real gardener."

He left the greenhouse, and in a moment came back with a small dry-goods box, which he set in front of the potting-bench. "That will be about right to stand on," said he.

"Oh, is it for me?" cried the little girl.

"It is for mine assistant, for mine under-gardener," said the old man. "Now, *Liebchen*, we will

to work. Those little pots are yours; those little plants," and he laid a half-dozen tiny rooted cuttings at her left hand, "are for you; that is your pile of soil.

"Now watch me carefully. I put the pot before me—so. I put a little earth in the bottom of the pot—so: just a little, that the roots will not try to eat the hard crock. I hold the small plant in my left hand—so: as it will stand when it is planted. With my right hand I cast the fine soil about the roots—so. I press it lightly with my fingers—so. It will now stand upright. I cast in more soil. I press it down more firmly. It needs now but the finishing touch. I cast a little soil on top, lightly; I do not press it down: I give the plant a little shake, a little knock on the bench—so. It is done." He stood back a step and surveyed with pride the work of his hands.

Mary watched with admiring eyes; then she tried faithfully to imitate, the chubby fingers poking the earth down carefully in the tiny pot. "How is that?" she asked anxiously.

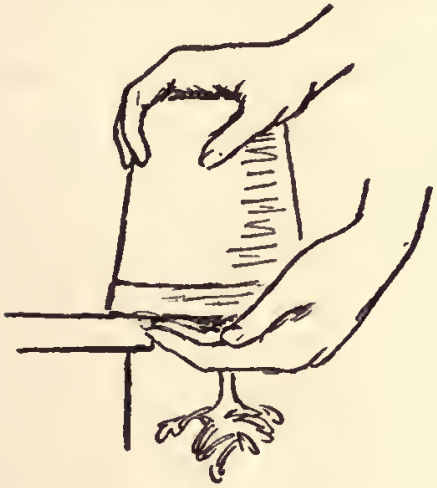
The old man took it in his big fingers and examined it attentively. "It is not quite straight, little one; and it goes in too deep. You would not like to sleep all night with your head under the bed-

clothes? No? This little fellow does not like that he get too far under, either."

He took a little plant from the pile of rooted cuttings, and held it up. "See," he said, pointing to the mark of the earth, "that is as far as he goes under the covers. If he is in too deep he cannot breathe."

He turned the pot upside down, knocking it lightly on the edge of the bench, and handed the empty pot back to her. "A little more soil in the bottom —see?" and he picked up another pot for himself.

"Ah, that is better; now look at me again."



The brown eyes of the young assistant watched the big fingers intently, the small brown hands worked industriously. At last she handed him a pot for inspection. Instead of poking and pushing the earth, Mr. Trommel looked at this one with undisguised admiration. "Ha," he exclaimed, beaming through his spectacles, "that is the work of a gardener!"

The little girl laughed delightedly.

"I 'm going to be a gardener when I grow up," she confided a moment later, "and I 'm going to have a garden just like yours, and a big glass house like yours, and roses and palms and everything in it—"

"Yes, yes," broke in Mr. Trommel; "a fine ambition. But be careful, little one; you are pushing the plant crooked—you must pot well if you would have a fine garden."

Mary repaired the mistake with repentant energy. "What kind of plants are these, Mr. Trommel? You did n't tell me."

"No?" said the old gardener, inquiringly. "It is Daphne. Do you know the story about Daphne?"

The under-gardener shook her head.

"Daphne, little one, was once a beautiful young lady. She was what they call a nymph—that is, a kind of young lady that lived in the woods."

"That must be nice," put in his listener.

"Yes, but it was not all pleasant; for once one of those young gods—the one they called Apollo—saw her, and he tried to catch her—"

"Maybe he was just playing tag," suggested the owner of the brown eyes.

"Perhaps," admitted Mr. Trommel; "but Daphne was frightened and hid herself in a great hollow tree. The young man could not then find her. But when Daphne wished to get out she could not—she was become a tree. That was what Apollo did to her."

"How could he?" asked the under-gardener.

"*Ach!*" said Mr. Trommel; "he was a very powerful young man. And since then she has changed still more: she has become a shrub. See!" and he held up the tiny pot in his hand; "we will have to wait some years for this one, but then the branches will be grown and the first thing in the spring they will all be covered with the dear little pink blossoms —so fragrant! Ah, you must come and see Daphne then!"

"Oh! I will," said Mary.

They worked in silence for a few minutes; the under-gardener was lost in thought. "Mr. Trommel," she said suddenly, "why could n't I have a little garden at home, in a box in the window, I mean? Would you show me how?"

"Yes, yes, we shall see," answered the old man,

"but not to-day; it is now time to go back, or you will be late for dinner. Wash your hands well in the tub of water, *Liebchen*, or the lady mother will think that gardeners are not nice."

"May I hang my apron on the nail here," asked Mary, "next to where you hang yours?"

"Yes, yes; I have a nail put lower down that is easier to reach. Have you found it?"

"I had a very nice time, Mr. Trommel," said the under-gardener, as she rose, rather breathless from the exertion of putting on her rubbers.

"It is good to have help," responded the old man. "Wait a minute," and he went to another bench and picked a small, pale-pink oxalis blossom; "that is for the lady doll."

CHAPTER II

THE ASSISTANT AT WORK

[February]

OF course on the sunshiny days there were other things to do, but every rainy afternoon found Mary across the street, hard at work in the big greenhouse. One of the nicest things to do was to spray the plants from the hose; it is much more interesting than watering with a little watering-pot.

"That is what makes the palms so lovely and green, is n't it, Mr. Trommel? You give them a bath so often."

"That is right: they cannot breathe if they are not clean; they breathe all over their bodies, not like we do, through a mouth and nose."

"Were you ever away in the country where you could not have a bath-tub, and instead you had to be sponged all over for your bath?"

Mary nodded.

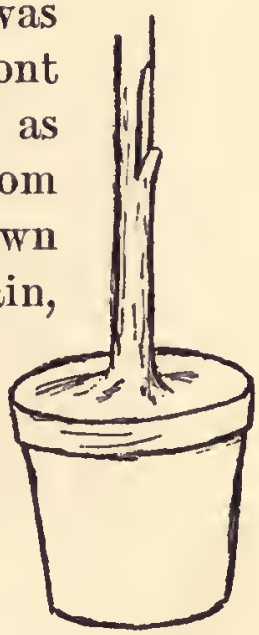
"Yes; well, that is the kind of bath the plants must sometimes have when they are in your house. In their own house, that is, in the greenhouse, they have things to their liking, and they have the shower-bath or the spray, as they need; but in your house, if you cannot give them that, you must just take a basin and a little water—not too cold—and a little sponge, and sponge the leaves carefully as if you were washing a baby—then they can breathe."

"There, there!" exclaimed Mr. Trommel, alarmed at the under-gardener's abandon in the use of the hose—"we have given water enough! Sit down here by me and watch me graft, and tell me about the garden."

"We-ell," began Mary, taking a long breath, "I 'm going to have a garden all my own. Father says I can have a place in the back yard, and I 'm going to plant everything in it—sweet peas, and roses, and nasturtiums, and pumpkins to make jack-o'-lanterns of. Could n't I begin it now, Mr. Trommel?"

"It is not yet March," said the old man, meditatively; "the little things would freeze out of doors before they could show their heads. Besides, we cannot yet dig; we could only plant in boxes now."

"What is that you are doing?" asked Mary, forgetting her garden and suddenly interested in Mr. Trommel's operations. The old man was sitting by a low bench, and had in front of him a row of balls of earth almost as large as croquet-balls, and protruding from each one was what looked like a dead brown stick. "What is that?" she asked again, as Mr. Trommel picked up one of these unmeaning-looking balls.



"This is grafting," he answered. "This in my hand, this is the stock." He held it wedged between his knees while he selected a smooth, green, prosperous-looking young shoot from a few he had laid beside him, "and this, this is the scion, that is, the baby he must adopt." He held the little twig between his lips. "See, I make a little slice off the stock—that is, the papa—so." He laid it aside, and took the young shoot again in his hand; "then I take a little slice off the baby—so" (suiting the action to the word and making a clean, smooth cut with his knife). He took up the stock again, and the two cut surfaces fitted together beautifully; holding them

with thumb and finger, he pulled a strand of raffia from the bunch thrust through his apron-strings and began to wind it around the two as carefully as if he were bandaging a limb. "I tie them together—so.

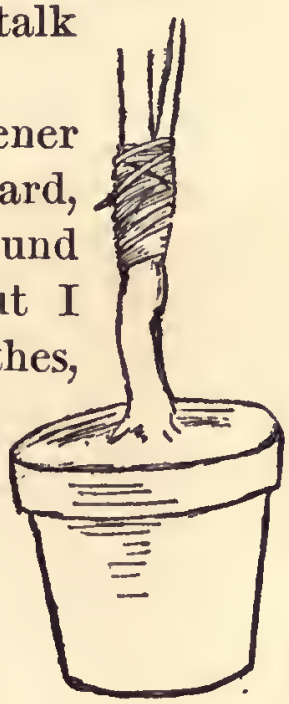
"Now," said Mr. Trommel, and gave a little grunt as he fastened the raffia string, "the papa will have to provide for the little one. All that he gets to eat from the soil goes to make the baby fat. He can have no pretty clothes, no flowers on—the child has it all; he must just work, work, send out roots, and find something to eat. It is a hard life for the stock."

"Does n't the little branch do anything?" asked Mary.

"No; the little one just lives off the papa, grows big, and looks pretty—that is all."

"Let me do one," coaxed the little girl.

"No, no," said the old gardener, hastily. "The knife is big for you, and you might get hurt; besides, I wish them to grow. Let us talk about the garden."



"We-ell," began the under-gardener again, "it 's going to be in the back yard, and father says I can have all the ground I want at the back of the yard, but I must n't go where Norah hangs the clothes, and I 'm going to have a beautiful garden. Do you think I could make a greenhouse like yours?" she suggested.

"That would take some time, little one; besides, one does not want a greenhouse in the summer, when one can be outdoors. You should have a pretty little garden, and some garden-seats, yes? And perhaps a summer-house for the lovely doll, yes? and pretty flowers all around that will not be much trouble—and little paths that are not for big folks among the little flower-beds—"

The brown eyes widened with delight. "Oh, yes!"

breathed the under-gardener, ecstatically — "that would be bea-yu-tiful. And we could do it, could n't we?" she asked eagerly.

"We are both such fine gardeners, *Liebchen*," said the old man, "that if the Herr Papa will but give us the land, undoubtedly we could."

CHAPTER III

PLANTING IN BOXES

[March]

"ARE N'T we going to plant the boxes, Mr. Trommel?" coaxed Mary. "You said 'in a few days,' and that was yesterday."

Herr Trommel laughed. "*Liebchen*," he said solemnly, "I fear you will grow to be the landscape-architect, as these Americans call a gardener. Already you have the passion for immediate effect. Why not wait and plant the seeds in the ground, and then the *liebe Gott* will help take care of them. If you have them in your house you will forget to give the little things a drink, and they will die."

"I think I could remember them better if we left them over here. I never forget to water things over here, Mr. Trommel," said Mary earnestly.

"Well, well; it is now March. We will make

ready the boxes to-day. Have you the seeds? Then you shall bring them over and we will start the babies growing. See if you can find three boxes under that bench yonder."

The under-gardener crawled with alacrity under the bench, and brought out, one after another, three shallow boxes, each two feet long and a foot wide, but not more than three inches deep.

"That is right; now you must fill them."

But before he had finished speaking, one of the boxes was on the potting-bench, and the small brown hands were rapidly scooping up the earth and filling it.

"Hold! Wait a bit! Not so fast!" exclaimed Mr. Trommel. "You must mix a little sand with that soil—it is too rich for the babies; it must be nourishing, but for the very little ones it must also be plain; half sand is not too much." He scooped with his big hand some sand from another bench, threw it into Mary's half-filled box, then bent down and took from under the bench a shallow square box with a bottom of wire netting; this he placed over one of the empty boxes. "It is better to sift it again," he said.

"Oh, let me do it," begged the under-gardener. "It is just like making cookies."

"'It is Better to Sift it Again,' He Said"

She sifted the sand and earth, giving the box little professional shakes, until it was full of the fine, soft earth and perfectly level.

"This is ever so much nicer than the dirt I have in my garden. It would make lovely mud-pies," said Mary, passing a chubby brown hand reflectively over the fine soil. "What makes it so much nicer, Mr. Trommel? Don't the seeds like the other kind?"

"That is fine soil," said the old gardener. "It is sifted; it is rich, for the fertilizer is well mixed in; so it is better for the little ones. Does the lady mama ever cut your meat for you?" he asked.

"She used to," admitted the under-gardener.

"Yes," said Mr. Trommel; "that is because you were yet a little girl; now you are larger you will cut it always for yourself. On the plants that we shall have here the roots are little; they cannot take and eat the big lumps as the trees can; we must make it small. I sift it many times; then it is nice for the little roots that cannot take big mouthfuls."

"I understand," said the assistant. "Now I'll run home and get the seeds."

"Here they are, Mr. Trommel!" cried Mary, coming in flushed and breathless, her hat a-dangle

at the back of her neck. "I ran 'most all the way."

Mr. Trommel put down his watering-pot and laughed. "*Ach!* what a rush we are in! The plants will not make haste for you like that!"

The under-gardener laid the package on the bench and tugged at the string. "I wanted to get a packet of every kind there was, but my money gave out," she explained, "and I had fifty cents saved from Christmas. There 's nasturtiums and chrysanthemums and sunflowers and poppies and asters and sweet peas and marigolds and hollyhocks," she enumerated proudly, counting over one by one the gaily colored seed packets. "Can't we plant them right now?" she finished, standing on tiptoe and stretching over the bench to pull one of the boxes within easy reach.

"The haste of the young American!" said Mr. Trommel. "You will have them all planted in the boxes before I see what you have. We had better save some of the seeds to plant in the ground," he said persuasively. "The three boxes we have prepared will be enough to care for, and a good gardener puts only one kind of seeds in a box, that they do not be mixed."

Mary looked a bit depressed.

"Perhaps you would like to plant some in a box at home, and let them grow in a window, if you are in so great haste," suggested Mr. Trommel.

But the assistant still looked troubled. "I was going to plant some in the house," she said. "I got a box and fixed the soil just as we did yesterday. I could n't dig up any in the yard, but there was a flower-pot in the house, and the plant was all dead, so I took that.

"Your sieve must be different from ours, Mr. Trommel; I tried the sieve from the flour-barrel, and the dirt would n't go through it; but the colander worked nicely; and I was getting the box filled just like these, but Norah came in and made an awful fuss because, she said, I got her sieve all dirty, and she opened the window and threw out all the nice sifted earth!"

Mr. Trommel shook his head sympathetically.

"She was real cross," went on the under-gardener. "I 'll tell you just what she said. 'Planting gardens is it?'—that 's what she said—'It 's just mussing in the dirt that all childer be after, and old Trommel should be transported for putting you up to it'—that 's just what she said. What 's 'transported,'

Mr. Trommel?" and the under-gardener fixed two grave brown eyes on the shining spectacles.

The old man meditated a moment. "It is 'delighted,'" he said; "it is 'very happy.' In the stories when the fine young man sees the beautiful young princess they say he was 'transported with joy.'"

"Oh!" said Mary thoughtfully, "then I will forgive Norah for saying it about you. But—but I think we 'd better just start the seeds here."

"Yes, yes," agreed Herr Trommel; "the three boxes will be all you can well take care of. Let us think. Suppose we take the hollyhocks first; they have to grow for so long before they can bloom; it is right to give them the first chance—a head start, do you call it? Yes. And the asters, and the marigolds, yes? Those sweet peas and the nasturtiums, they go 'way down deep—they will do as well to wait and start outside. The sunflowers also, they do not like to be moved; they better go outside, too."

Mr. Trommel pulled one of the boxes toward the edge of the bench, and, with a piece of lath for a ruler and a pointed stick for a pencil, he drew lines

lightly across the smooth earth of the freshly filled box, as if he were ruling a slate for writing, only these lines were an inch apart.

"Now, little one, drop the seeds in one at a time along these lines."

"My mama, when she put seeds in a box, just scattered them all over," objected Mary.

"The lady mama," said Mr. Trommel, "is a most excellent lady, but—she is not a professional gardener."

"Like you and me?" asked the under-gardener.

"Yes, yes; not a professional like you or me. You see, mine assistant, we cannot begin too early to teach the little plants to be orderly and not play with the bad plant-children—that is, the little weeds. We plant them this way so that they get not mixed when they are very small.

"Now press the seeds down lightly. No, no! Not so—very gently"; for the under-gardener had begun to pat with vigor.

"Now we water them, don't we?" she asked. "Just sprinkle with the little watering-pot?"

"Yes, but wet them well this first time; and remember, little one, we must not let the little things get quite dry. These babies cannot eat much yet;

they drink and drink, not much at a time, but often ; they must have the liquid food, as the doctors say. Also they must be kept warm. So you must not forget them."

CHAPTER IV

CROCUSES AND THE SNOWDROP

[March]

"MY little crocuses are just awake," said Mr. Trommel to Mary, who had stopped at his gate on the way to school. "You want to come and look at them?"

The under-gardener promptly hung her school-bag on a picket of the fence.

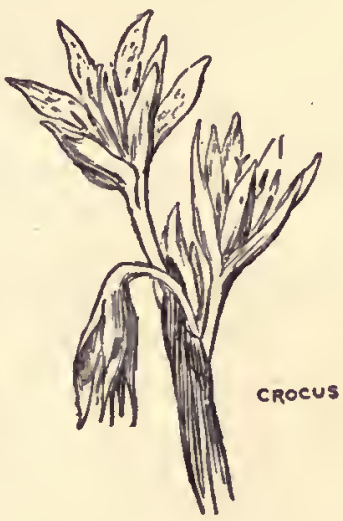
"You are sure there is time?" he questioned, before he opened the gate. "I must not make you late for school; that is a dreadful thing."

"I 'm very early," assured Mary. "I was just going 'way around by Margaret's house. There 's lots of time."

"Well, well," said Mr. Trommel, "the little crocuses are awake. But you have not seen my snowdrops, either. Run down the path and you will find them —there!"

"In front of this pussy-willow?"

"Pussy-willow, indeed!" exclaimed Herr Trommel, indignantly. "That is a Japanese magnolia—that is *Magnolia-stellata*. The buds wear the fur hoods, it is true, but they are fatter, and the fur is finer. They are no pussy-willows!"


CROCUS

But Mary was bending over the infant crocuses, that were just beginning to show their gold. "Are n't they darlings!" she said.

"Do you know where they get the gold from?" asked Mr. Trommel. "No? It is some of the Nibelungen gold that the Rhine maidens stole away from Alberich. You know that the Mother Earth, Erda, takes care of it, and she wished to put it where it would do no harm, so she gave some of it to the little crocuses to keep, and now that the crocuses have it, men may love it and it does them no harm; they do not quarrel nor fight over it any more.

"Come and let us find the snowdrops. Ah, they are the darlings!" he said, kneeling down in the dead brown grass, where groups of the dainty blossoms had pushed up through the earth and were nod-

ding joyously in the rough March wind. "It is a dear one, this first baby of the year, so dainty—and so brave, too!"

"Could n't I have one?" begged the under-gardener.

"Certainly, certainly, little one—yes, yes; take a little bunch of them. But I like better, myself, to look at them here. See how dainty the little stalks are—so strong, yet so slight; and see how prettily the little bell is balanced, and look inside the pretty bell and see the fine little lines of green—is it not lovely?"

"How does it ever come up through the ground without getting a bit mussed?" asked Mary, looking wonderingly at the slender little flower.

"You see that white tip at the end of the leaf? It is very hard."

Mary nodded.

"Yes. Well, when it is ready to come up through the ground, the leaf is folded and rolled tightly, and the little snowdrop is curled safe inside, and the hard, white point of the leaf pushes and bores its way through the earth; that is the way it comes up. Do you know the story about the snowdrop?"

"No, I never heard it. Tell me, Mr. Trommel," she begged.

"Well," said the old gardener, meditatively, "the snowdrop was once a little snow maiden. You have heard, perhaps, of the Little People of the Snow? Yes?"

The listener nodded eagerly. "Oh, yes, I know all about them; it was a snow maiden that Eva went with—a fairy creature

> 'With lily cheeks and floating flaxen hair,
> And eyes as blue as ice.'

They used to come down from the high mountains in the winter.

> 'With trailing garments through the air they came,
> Or walked the ground with girded loins, and threw
> Spangles of silvery frost upon the grass,
> And edged the brook with glistening parapets,
> And built it crystal bridges, touched the pool,
> And turned its face to glass.'

Don't you remember? And Eva met the little Snow maiden by the big linden and went with her."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Trommel. "Well, the snowdrop was once one of those little people, and she lived in a wonderful snow palace."

"I know about them, too," broke in the listener, with shining eyes. "The Snow maiden took Eva in

and showed it to her, and she saw the wonderful dance through the window of—of 'pellucid ice'—and she said, 'Look, but thou mayst not enter!' and there were gardens and trees and flowers," she went on breathlessly, "and all

'seemed wrought
Of stainless alabaster.' "

The old gardener smiled. "Yes. Well, little one, there was once a fine young knight imprisoned under the snow palace; he did not belong to the little Snow People; he was one of Mother Earth's children. His name was Galanthus, and he wore a suit of beautiful green armor.

"One day the little Snow maiden found him there, in the dungeon under the palace, and she was sorry for him. So every day she crept down to the dungeon, and the young knight told her stories of his Mother Earth and the wonderful things she did, which the little Snow maiden had never heard of.

"Now, you know the spring is death to the little Snow People; before a breath of warmth touches the snow they are frightened, and rush and hurry to the high mountains, where there is snow and cold all the year. But the little Snow maiden forgot about

the south wind. She was in the dungeon with the green knight, listening to the stories she loved, when suddenly the walls of the snow palace began to tremble and fall. It was the breath of the south wind. The little Snow maiden knew it was death; she was frightened, and trembled and wept. Then the knight Galanthus took her in his arms; but it was of no use: in a moment he was changed, too. The beautiful green armor became dull and brown, and the knight was as if he was dead. But he still held the little Snow maiden in his arms, and they sank together into the ground, down, down!

"Now, the ground is a wonderful place, and the Mother Earth was sorry for the little Snow maiden because she had lost her playmates; so she promised her that she might go back to the light again to find them.

"So every year the little snowdrop comes up from the earth. She must wait all the winter until Galanthus can push his way through the ground; and as soon as he can he lifts the little Snow maiden in his arms, and he folds her close in his green cloak, so she is not frightened; then he takes his green lance with the silver point and pushes his way up to the light.

"But the Snow maiden is always just too late: the

Little People of the Snow are gone. She is sorry; that is why the snowdrop hangs her head."

The under-gardener drew a long breath, and the two walked up the path to the gate in silence. She took her school-bag from the fence-picket. "I know now why the snowdrop has the little streaks of green 'way inside the bell," she said.

"Yes?" said Mr. Trommel, inquiringly.

"It is the knight's color. In the stories, you know, the knight always wears the princess's color. But the little Snow maiden loved Galanthus, and so she wore *his* color. Of course she would n't wear it outside, for it is n't the thing; so she fastened the green 'way inside the little bell, where nobody could see it. And she really does n't care that she has lost the Little People of the Snow. Even if she does hang her head, she does n't look a bit sorry. She would rather stay with Galanthus."

"I believe you are right, *Liebchen*," said the old man.

CHAPTER V

MAKING CUTTINGS

[March]

"ISN'T there something else we can do for my garden?" asked Mary. It was a rainy day late in March, and some of the seeds were so very leisurely in coming up that the under-gardener was beginning to feel the discomfort of hope deferred.

"Um-m-m," said Herr Trommel, reflectively, as he wound the raffia-string about the young azalea he was grafting. "I tell you, little one," he said, after a few minutes' thought, "you will be having the borders to your flower-beds; the box would be too slow for you—yes? We will make a tiny little low hedge of privet—"

The under-gardener was immediately interested.

"Yes," went on Mr. Trommel; "and if you can be very careful with the big knife, you shall make the cuttings."

"I will be *very* careful," assured the under-gardener. "Will it be a real hedge, that I can trim myself?"

"Yes, yes, if the lady mama will lend you her scissors."

"I have scissors of my own," said Mary, with dignity.

Mr. Trommel left the greenhouse for a moment, and then came back with a bundle of privet branches in his hand—about a yard long. "I cut them this morning to start a little hedge for myself, but you shall have some; old Trommel can wait," he said, as he cut the string of the bundle and picked up one of the branches.

"Now look carefully," and he cut about an inch off the thicker end of the branch, "just below the 'eye.' See? That is the end that goes in the ground. Now," and he made another quick, clean cut, leaving in his left hand a bit of the privet branch three inches long, "just above the 'eye'—that is, the top. Some people, just because privet will grow, whatever you do to it, they take the shears and chop, chop, cut off square, as if they would make fodder for cattle; but the good gardener takes the knife and makes the slanting cut

just below the 'eye' at the bottom, just above the 'eye' at the top. Sometimes, when we put them in the ground right at once, not in the sand on the bench, we make them longer—twice as long; but that is long enough for you. Now," and he handed her his knife, "you make one."

"Why do you call those little bumps on the stick 'eyes'?" questioned the under-gardener, as she took the branch from Mr. Trommel.

"Why do we call them 'eyes'?" repeated the old German. "I think it is because they are the little windows that the little leaves can peek out of when they are looking to see if it is warm enough to come out."

"Oh," said Mary, comprehendingly.

"Ah, that is nice," said Mr. Trommel, looking approvingly at the cutting which Mary held up for inspection; "that is right. Be careful that you lay the little cuttings all the same way, *Liebchen*, else you will be putting some little fellow in the sand head first."

The small fingers worked assiduously.

"No, no," said Mr. Trommel, as she came, in the cutting-making process, to the thin end of the branch; "throw that away. That is too little, too

weak; it is not strong enough to start out for itself. You see, little one, we take the cuttings from the wood that is young and strong. Do you know that it is hard to move old people—they do not like to try the new place? No? So we cannot make cuttings of the old wood; they do not like to try the new way of life: they will not strike out for themselves. And we cannot make them of the very young wood, either; then they are too weak to work for themselves. They should be about one year old.

"Come, now. Stand up on the box and I will show you how we put them in the sand. I take my ruler and my pointed stick, and I draw a line—so—from the back of the bench to the edge."

"I think if I get up on the bench," suggested Mary, "that I can see much better." So she perched on the edge of the bench and watched Mr. Trommel attentively.

"I poke a hole with the stick—so," said Mr. Trommel, illustrating as he went on; "I put the little cutting in—so—till he is half in; then I press the soil down—so," he went on rapidly, putting in one after another in the firm, damp sand.

"Let me—let me!" begged Mary.

"Well, well," assented Mr. Trommel, resigning his

pointed stick. "Carefully, now, and press the soil down—so. After they are all in we must water them well."

"Would they grow for me, Mr. Trommel," asked Mary, "if I just cut some branches from our hedge and made the cuttings and put them in a box in the house?"

"They will grow for anybody," answered the old man. "Just put them not in the sun for three or four days, till they have a little time to think, and then in the sun. They would grow, too, if we waited until it is a little warmer, and then put them in the ground in the garden, instead of starting them here in the house."

18107

CHAPTER VI

BEGINNING THE GARDEN

[April]

MARY had just finished her breakfast and was leaning back in her chair, engaged in blissful meditation. It was the Easter vacation, and you did n't have to think about going to school the minute breakfast was over; besides, were not she and Mr. Trommel to mark out the garden to-day?

"Mary," said Mr. Maxwell, interrupting the brown study, "when are you and Trommel going to stake out that wonderful garden patch?"

"My garden is n't a 'patch,'" objected Mary; "it 's going to be paths, and little flower-beds, and all inclosed."

"Inclosed?" queried her father.

"Yes; Mr. Trommel said a wall would be nice, but that would take too long to make; so we 're going

to take some chicken-wire that he has at his house and inclose the garden that way. Mr. Trommel says," announced Mary, "that there are two things you ought to have in a garden: one is beauty, and the other is—the other is—" she stopped perplexed.

"Vegetables?" suggested her father.

"No; that was n't it. Oh, I know—'seclusion'; that 's what he said, and that 's what the chicken-wire is for."

"That is its use in the chicken-runs," assented Mr. Maxwell; "but the beauty is n't so prominent."

"Oh, but it 's going to be all covered with vines and nasturtiums—just you wait and see! There is Mr. Trommel now, father!" she cried suddenly, jumping up and running to the window.

Sure enough, there was the short, square figure of the old gardener. Not in the customary shirt-sleeves and apron—by no means! His coat was carefully buttoned in its Sunday fashion, and, disdaining Mary's well-worn short cut, he was walking around the block to enter at the front gate.

Mary ran to meet him.

"Half of that space at the back of the yard will be enough for the child's garden, will it not, Herr

Trommel?" asked Mary's father, as the three stood surveying the back yard. "Which side is the better?"

"Um-m-m!" said Mr. Trommel, reflectively. "She better have this corner. The tall fence will keep off the wind on the north, and the fence at the side will keep off the wind from the west. And if she have half, you say? That will be about fifteen feet wide and twenty feet long; that should be garden enough."

"To here, then," said Mr. Maxwell, driving a stake at a safe distance from Norah's clothes-poles; "that ought to be a large enough garden to keep you out of mischief, Mary, especially if you are inclosed in wire netting."

"There 's going to be a gate, is n't there, Mr. Trommel?" appealed Mary.

"Certainly, there will be a fine little gate," affirmed he.

"I suppose you 'll need some fertilizer here, Mr. Trommel?" said Mary's father. "I told John Quinlan to bring two wheelbarrowfuls. He is coming to do the digging. Will that be enough?"

"This soil is not so bad," said Mr. Trommel, poking it judicially with his stick; "two barrows

full of good manure should give plenty for the little border-bed. An inch deep over the beds should be enough."

"Quinlan will be here to do the work for you. Will you excuse me if I leave now, Mr. Trommel? I shall have to run for my train."

"Certainly, certainly," said Herr Trommel, making his precise little bow.

"Now, little one," he said to the under-gardener, "we will to work." He took a two-foot rule from his pocket and measured along the back fence from the corner. "Twelve, fourteen, fifteen," he counted. "Hand me the stake there—so," and he drove it in the ground. "Now hold you this end of string here at the stake while I draw it to the fence-corner to get the distance with the string—so. Now" (he held it in one hand) "walk along to the *Herr Papa's* stake, so, and let us see if it is the fifteen feet. Good! The *Herr Papa* did not make the bad guess. This is a lady's way of measuring, but it will do for us. Now we stretch the string between these stakes—so."

Mary was deeply interested. "Now we are going to mark out a flower-bed, are n't we?" she asked, when the garden inclosure was outlined with stick and string.

"Yes, yes; now we mark out the border." He scrutinized the under-gardener a moment. "Two feet will be wide enough for you to reach, little one. Can you find another of the stakes I brought, and we will mark it for the good John."

"Let me do it this time!" coaxed the under-gardener.

"Very well; you shall drive the stakes, but we better let the old Peter measure—so. Two feet from the side and two feet from the back. Now we will tie the string to one stake and pull it tight to the other, so that the good John—"

"Will trip?" suggested the under-gardener. "What fun!"

"No, no! What a thought for a good child to have! So that the good John will cut the turf straight."

"Where do I be after puttin' the manure, sor?" called the big Irishman who was wheeling his barrow toward the prospective garden.

"He may put it in the papa's garden, you think?" asked Mr. Trommel of his assistant.

"Oh, yes," said Mary.

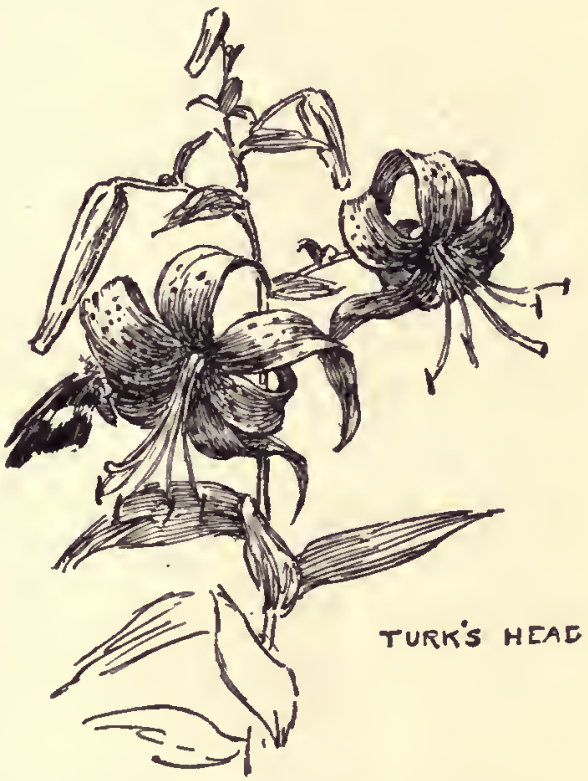
"Come, then, John, and see where you must dig," said Mr. Trommel, as the wheelbarrow was emptied

across the line from Mary's garden. "I superintend for Mr. Maxwell the making of the little lady's garden. Do you see the lines made with the string?"

"Whativer is it?"

"It 's a garden," said Mary, in an aggrieved voice; "and it 's going to be beautiful—it 's—"

"Never mind, little one," broke in Mr. Trommel. "You should dig, John, between those lines. Dig two feet deep, and throw up the earth as if you make a trench. We shall then throw the earth back again and mix in the manure well; we shall then have the good soil."



"Now look, little one," said Mr. Trommel, when a trench had been dug the length of the garden; "see, now, how we fill the bed for the plants. We throw in some of the loose soil, then spread the manure; then throw in more of the soil, and again a little manure."

"Just like layer-cake," remarked Mary.

"Yes," assented Mr. Trommel; "like the layer-cake—only different. We must not have the manure touch the roots; it is too rich. The little roots must have bread with their jam—yes?

"Now smooth it over with the rake, and to-morrow we shall plant."

CHAPTER VII

PLANTING SWEET PEAS

[April]

IT must be admitted that at this time the garden did not look very beautiful, except to the robins, who thought the earth had been freshly turned for their especial benefit. It was only an oblong inclosure, two sides bounded by the wire netting and two by the board fence. A narrow border-bed two feet wide ran around the inside of the little plot. Mary, however, surveyed her small kingdom with the imaginative pride of the true gardener.

"Now we are ready to plant, Mr. Trommel," she said, with a sigh of satisfaction; "the bed is all raked. I combed it and combed it, and the tangles are all out."

The old gardener scrutinized the smooth earth critically. "There are little brown threads of roots

—see, there and there," he said, pointing at the offenders.

"Do those little things make any difference?" questioned Mary, incredulously.

"Those little brown things will make trouble for the sweet peas just as soon as they can. They are roots of iniquity, *Liebchen;* we must not have them in our garden. It is easier to eradicate evil when it is little than when it grows big."

"I think so," agreed the under-gardener, dutifully, pulling out the small root-fibers.

"Now we are ready!" she said, with a breath of relief. "And we put them in deep. Deep as my finger?"

"No, no! We better make a trench. Can you make one with the little hoe?"

"I can make a beautiful one. Let 's have it here by the fence."

"They better go by the wire, *Liebchen.* They like more air than they would get by the fence; they have the little wings, you know. Besides, we did not make the ground there so rich as here; that is for the nasturtiums. It is among the plants as among the pretty ladies: you can judge nothing of the appetite by the looks. Now, you would think that of the two the nasturtiums would like the most

to eat, they run so fast and are so full of life and color. But no! they will be happy on poor soil, sandy soil, with almost nothing to eat; they do not mind much going thirsty. But the sweet peas, so dainty and delicate, they will yet eat all the food you can give them, and they drink, drink—*aber*—nothing but water, although they like the liquid manure."

"They 've lots to eat here," said Mary, with satisfaction. "Now I 'm going to dig the trench. I think I 'll take my shovel," she decided, after considering her implements with the care of a cautious golfer. "Shovels and trenches seem to go together, Mr. Trommel."

"It is small," assented the old man; "it will not do much harm."

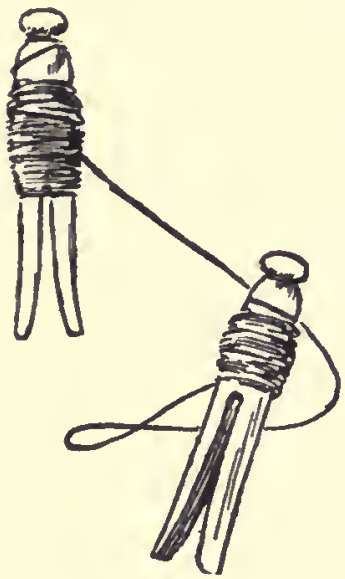
"So far from the wire?" questioned she, putting in the shovel about three inches from the wire.

Mr. Trommel nodded. "Can you make it straight?"

"I have a string," said the under-gardener, proudly, putting one hand in her apron pocket; "I made that myself out of two clothes-pins, and it rolls up so. See," she said, holding up a clothes-pin and string arrangement. "Clothes-pins are very useful, Mr. Trommel."

"That is a most interesting contrivance," said Herr Trommel.

"Now, you hold this clothes-pin here," said the under-gardener, briskly, "while I walk toward the fence and unroll the string, just as if you were holding a kite for me to fly. You can't stick the clothes-pin in first and then stretch the string, because it pulls out," she explained.



The old gardener obediently did as he was bid—stooped down and held the clothes-pin until the string was pulled straight and the pin at the other end driven in and stamped upon.

"I think he would go in easier if you should cut off one leg," suggested Mr. Trommel, looking reflectively at the clothes-pin in his hand.

"Perhaps he would," said Mary, brightening. "Will you cut it off for me? I have only scissors."

"You must make the trench deeper than that, little one; we must have it six inches. The seeds like to be in deep, where it is cool and moist. You know, we put the manure far down at the bottom

when we dug the bed, so the roots when they are hungry will go down even farther to find something good."

"Is that far enough apart?"

Mr. Trommel looked down into the trench through his spectacles. "Two inches," he said; "that will do, but we shall have to thin them later. Thinning always seems a wicked thing; it is like killing some of the children because there is not enough to eat for all, as the bad stepmother does in the fairy stories. Wait, wait!" he exclaimed suddenly, "not so deep. We do not want more than two inches over these little things."

"I thought you said they must go in deep," said Mary.

"Yes, yes; but the seedlings are little things and do not like to push their way up through quite such a heavy blanket. When the seedlings are up, then we push the soil around and cover them up to their necks."

"But you said, when we were potting in the winter, that we must n't cover the little plants with earth only just as deep as they were before, or else they could n't breathe," objected his listener.

"Yes, yes!" said Herr Trommel, impatiently. "I

"The Old Gardener Obediently Did as He was Bid"

tell you, little one, plants are much alike, but often they are different."

The under-gardener looked a trifle perplexed. "Gardening takes quite a little experience," she sighed, as she covered the seeds carefully and left an embankment of earth beside the trench. "Now we water them just like we do the other things, don't we?"

"We have to water them well; they are thirsty, these little fellows."

"How long will it be before they come up?"

"I think they will make haste for us; they are late this year, you know, and they have some time to make up. Sometimes I have put them in the ground three weeks earlier, but this year the old Mother Earth slept late, and did not unlock her house at the right time, so the plants could not come out. My dear magnolia blossoms have not yet dared to thrust their noses out of the little fur hoods. You will see soon how all the shrubs must hurry."

"Is n't there anything else we can plant?" asked Mary, raking the bed by the fence.

Herr Trommel meditated a moment. "We might put in the poppies," he said doubtfully; "they do not mind the cold. Have you the seeds here?"

But the under-gardener was already running toward the house.

Mr. Trommel was still looking meditatively at the sweet-pea trench and then at the fence when Mary came back, packet in hand. "Wait, wait," he said, as she began to tear off the end of the packet. "Let us first see where we shall put them. We shall have nasturtiums along the back of the fence ; yes, and the sweet peas we have along the wire; we must put something in between to keep the peace, *Liebchen.*"

"Why, what would they do to each other?" asked Mary, fixing a pair of surprised brown eyes on the old man's face.

"Well," replied Herr Trommel, "it is not that the flowers themselves have any quarrel with each other; it is only a matter of clothes, *Liebchen*, but sometimes that is serious. These sweet peas are the dainty pink and white ; they do not like to be so near the bright scarlet of the nasturtiums. Perhaps we might put some of these morning-glories in between, eh? It is yet too early for those, but the border is narrow—you can easily reach past. We might plant the poppies in front. They are mixed," said Herr Trommel, sadly ; "we cannot help the colors."

"Don't you like seeds mixed?" asked Mary, anxiously. "When you get a mixed packet you get so many kinds for five cents."

The old man shook his head. "I like to know what I am planting. If I ask some children to spend the summer with me, I like to know whom I have; I do not want them 'mixed,' even from the same family. I had rather have mine under-gardener, for instance, than the cousin who comes sometimes — what is his name?"

"Kenneth?" asked Mary.

Mr. Trommel nodded vigorously.

"Oh, Kenneth is nice! He knows how to do lots of things. He made a spring-board the last time he was here—just dug a hole and put one end of the board under the fence, and then put a hassock under it to make the spring, and—"

"Yes, yes!" broke in Mr. Trommel; "he used my garden-sticks for fencing."

"He is coming to my house as soon as school is over; he is making a garden, too."

"Yes?" said Herr Trommel, without interest. "He may grow to be a fine young man, but—I would rather not have him in my garden. Come, let us plant the poppies."

"Are n't they little!" said Mary, in surprise.

"Very little; we have to mix them with some sand to give them something to hold, so that they will not blow away."

"I could mix them in a candy-box, could n't I?"

"That will be large enough; we put twice as much sand as we have seeds."

"The poppies would be lost in a trench, I think," volunteered Mary.

"I fear if we put them in a trench we should never see the pretty poppies. Just sprinkle them lightly over the ground—so."

"Don't you put anything over them? Just pat them down?"

"Just pat them down and sprinkle them a little, that is all. These poppies are like Eskimo babies: they do not mind the cold. Ha!" he said, suddenly straightening himself, "old Peter has other things to do! I set out some roses to-morrow, little one," he said, as he turned to go; "I have some from across the sea, from France; you wish to see how we do it?"

"Oh, yes!" she said, stopping a moment from patting the poppy seeds.

"I shall be at them in the afternoon. Be sure

you put the tools away, little one; it will rain to-night, I think."

"I always put them away, Mr. Trommel," said the under-gardener, with dignity.

CHAPTER VIII

MAKING A ROSE GARDEN

[April]

"HELLO, little one! Come over to work with old Peter?"

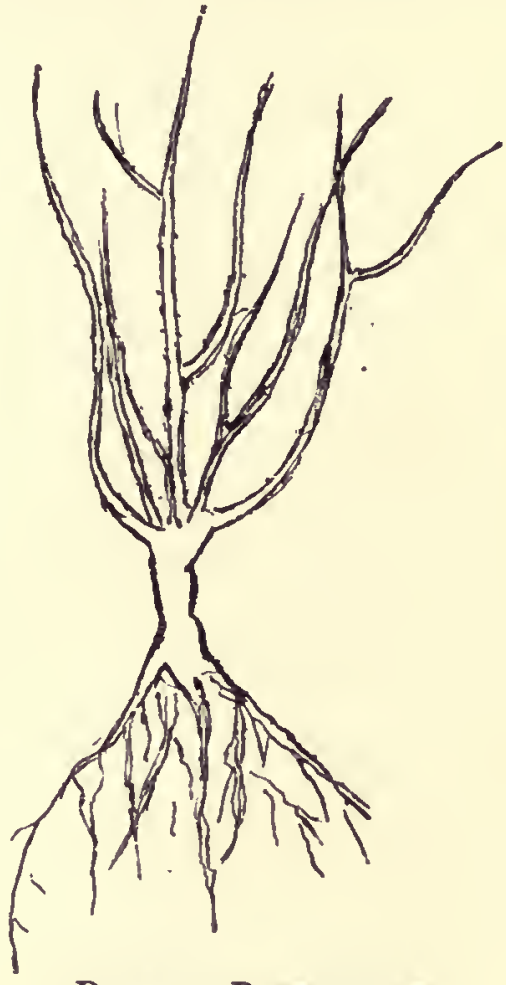
Mary nodded vigorously, pulled off her hat, and then pushed off the rubbers with dexterous toes. "I was almost afraid it would n't be possible. Oh, are *those* the roses?" she asked in a disappointed voice, catching sight of the unpromising-looking heap, and then turning to look at a brown branch with roots a-dangle which Mr. Trommel held in his hand. "I 've seen lots prettier ones in the florists', and they were all in bloom."

The old gardener looked lovingly down at the brown branch. "The *dear* lady!" he said caressingly, as if the rose had been insulted.

He looked over the branch for a few moments in

silence. Then he spoke: "You are not a gardener yet, *Liebchen*, and you are an American. People who are not gardeners and are Americans must always be buying roses when they are in bloom, and shrubs when they are in leaf, and set out trees as big as they can. Everything they must see, and then have at once.

"This rose here is asleep yet. She is Catherine Mermet, an old kind, but lovely! She was dug last fall, and has been lying asleep all winter; in June she will be ready to flower."



DORMANT ROSE BEFORE PRUNING

"Won't you hurt her?" asked Mary, in alarm; for Mr. Trommel was cutting the branches and leaving but one shoot, and that he cut until it was not more than six inches long.

He shook his head. "No. You see, I cut her back —so; she can then be quiet and have little to do

until she is used to the new place. I cut off the roots a little also. Now, when the sun and the rain waken her, she will feel like a new plant and much younger; she will send down the new little roots, and on top the strong new shoots will come up, and in June there will be roses for us —"

"Better than if it were blooming now?" questioned the under-gardener.

"Better than if it were at work now," answered Herr Trommel; "besides, she will be a stronger plant.

"When we prune roses we cut out all the wood that looks a bit weak — see?" he said, taking up another rose root. "That little branch comes off; it is too weak. I leave but these two; they are fine, strong shoots; but I cut them back — so."

"Let me do one," begged Mary.

Herr Trommel demurred. "If it were anything but a rose," he said. "Wait until you are bigger, *Liebchen*. Did you see the fine bed I have made for them?" he added, changing the subject hastily.

"The square place on the other side of the path?"

"Yes, yes, that is it. I have there three feet of good soil, with a layer of broken stone underneath for drainage, — they do not like wet feet, — and the most beautiful manure for them! I often think

when I make up the beds for my roses that Job made a great mistake. Yes. When he found it necessary to sit on the dung-heap, he should first have put some earth over it and then planted roses on top. It would have been good for the roses; it would also have made it much pleasanter for Job. Yes.

"The roses, little one, are very dainty and delicate-looking, but, like the sweet peas, you can hardly give them too much to eat. They like good food, and plenty of it. It is only in the stories that the lady looks very lovely and eats nothing; we gardeners know better, and I think she in the story went down the back stairs and found something to eat—some wurst or frankfurters — when the man who told the story knew nothing about it.

"You see, *Liebchen*, the rose has been for years the fine lady of the garden; the — what do you say? —the society lady—yes! She is also what they call exclusive: she likes but to live with herself and other roses. Then, she must have very rich food —yes, and a great many baths; and she must have her beauty-sleep—so we cut back the branches, as you see; and she does not wish too many children to take care of, so we take off many of the buds. She does not use the—the cosmetics, but she has her little toilet preparations."

"What!" exclaimed Mary, incredulously. "Do roses have tooth-powder and cologne and—and curling-tongs, and those things?"

"Not exactly," admitted Mr. Trommel. "They have kerosene spray, and whale-oil emulsion, and Bordeaux mixture, instead of cologne; powder they use, too—sometimes powdered sulphur put on the under side of the leaves where it will not show; and when they begin to bloom they also like some liquid manure as a tonic.

"*Liebchen*, plants are like people: when they become very highly cultivated the *liebe Gott* does much, but the gardener he also does somewhat. There!" he said, ending his lecture suddenly, "the roses are now ready."

"I 'm going to plant some of them for you," said the under-gardener coaxingly, as she followed him along the little path to the rose-bed.

"Well," said Herr Trommel, hesitating, "you will be very careful?"

"Oh, *very* careful," repeated Mary, with assuring emphasis.

"Well, then, we put the first one in here; this is Prince Camille de Rohan," he said, handing one of the plants to his assistant. "He has pretty flowers,

but his habits are not very good. It is not often he grows to be a fine plant."

The under-gardener was already down on her knees at the edge of the bed. "Make the hole here?" she inquired, thrusting in the trowel, and then shaking back her curls to look at the old man.

He nodded approvingly.

"Very deep, so the roots will have plenty of room," explained Mary, as if she were conducting a field class, while working industriously with the trowel, "and spread the roots out just the way they were before, very carefully, because he is asleep; and you hold him with your left hand, so, and push the dirt in with the other, just as if you were potting a little bit of a plant —"

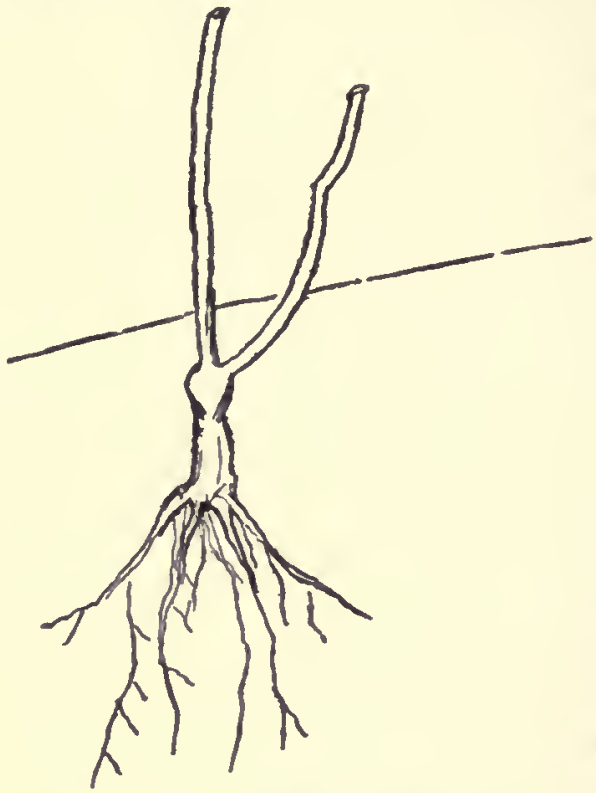
"Wait, wait, let us see," said Herr Trommel, suddenly interrupting the discourse. "Have you him deep enough so that the earth will come over the graft? Yes? That is right," he said, peering into the hole. "If we have not that little knob covered up he will 'sucker,' and that is a bad thing for the graft to do."

"What is 'sucker'?" asked the assistant.

"You remember what I told you when we were grafting?"

"About the papa and the baby he had to take care of? Oh, yes, I remember."

"Well, look now, here, above the little knob. That is the graft, the Prince Camille. Below the knob, the roots and this bit of stem—see? This is the stock, the papa; he is Manetti. But sometimes he forgets he has the child to care for: he thinks he would like to be pretty himself, so he uses up some of the baby's food and he sends up a shoot from here, see, below the graft. Then we call it a bad name and say it is a sucker, and cut it off; if we did not, the graft, the baby, would have but little to eat, for the stock is stronger. That is why we put the graft down in the ground two or three inches below the surface; the papa cannot then breathe, so he cannot well send up



ROSE AFTER PRUNING, SET IN THE GROUND THREE INCHES BELOW THE GRAFT

shoots. He does not need to breathe; he must just work and find food for the baby; he is a common fellow, and it is all he is good for!"

"I understand. Now we put water in the hole," announced Mary, resuming her field lecture, "and that settles and washes the soil down about the roots without bothering them; and now we fill up with dirt and push it down, just as if we were potting a little plant—and now it's all done! I'm sure the prince did n't wake up, Mr. Trommel," she said earnestly.

"I am sure he did not, *Liebchen;* I did not hear him make a sound. Now I put the next one in—see, I put him about three feet away. They do not like to be too close, these aristocrats; they do not like crowding. No."

"Why could n't we plant the little seedlings from the boxes in my garden? They would n't mind the cold any more than the roses, would they?"

"Ah, but you see they are very little, very tender, the seedling plants. They are but babies; you must treat babies differently from big people: they must be kept warmer. Prince Camille, here, is two years old; he is a young fellow able to go by himself. He is asleep now, too; he will not mind trans-

planting. But I could not now set out a rose cutting, a baby from the greenhouse—it would die. I must wait until the fine weather, when all the babies can be out.

"First we plant the shrubs and trees—they are yet asleep; we must plant them soon, because they are soon awake—then they do not like it. Then, also, if we must, we plant the perennials,—phloxes and hollyhocks and such things,—though it is better to plant them in the fall. Next we plant the seeds in the ground out of doors; they are asleep, too, and will not wake for a little while. Then, too, we plant the evergreens, for they do not wake so early; they do not make the changes in their dress in the spring, and so the Mother Earth lets them sleep later. And last we set out the seedlings from the boxes, the little babies that are already awake and growing. They are spoilt children: they have been brought up in the greenhouse with everything just as they like it, so if we put them out too early they find the out-of-doors cold and hard; they shiver and wish they were back in the house. When we grow the seedlings in a cold frame, out of doors, or where there is not the extra heat, then we can put them out earlier; they are not such sensitive little things."

"I understand," said the under-gardener.

"Do you?" demanded Mr. Trommel, fixing his spectacles on the assistant's face. "Then what did I say?"

"You said we move the shrubs first, because they live outdoors all winter and don't mind the cold, but we have to hurry and move them while they are asleep; and we move the pre-ennials, for they are asleep too, but we ought n't to move them until fall; and next come the seeds, and then last the babies from the greenhouse, and we have to wait until it is very comfortable for them, and if things wake up very early we have to plant them the night before—that is, in the fall."

"That is not at all bad," said Mr. Trommel, beaming approvingly on his assistant; "you will make a fine gardener some day."

"I hope so," said Mary, earnestly.

CHAPTER IX

WAITING FOR THE SWEET PEAS

[April]

WHEN Mary pushed open the gate, Herr Peter Trommel was sitting on the step of his greenhouse, smoking his pipe as peacefully as if it were not Saturday morning, the busiest of the week. "Ah, a fine day, little one," said he, lifting the pipe from his mouth and puffing out a cloud of smoke, "and how does the planting?"

The small gardener's sleeves were rolled up; she had evidently been already at work. "I came over for some advice, Mr. Trommel. The sweet peas are n't up yet. Do you think they are all right? Ought n't we to look at them?" she added anxiously.

The old gardener laughed. "When did we plant them?"

"Almost a week ago," said Mary, reproachfully.

"Oh, the little ladies are but scarcely awake yet; they are just thinking about stretching their feet down and stretching their arms up toward the light; wait a bit and you shall see the pretty green leaves."

"Are n't *you* planting anything to-day?" she asked.

"Well," said Herr Trommel, reflectively, "my roses—they have a smoke this morning, so I thought old Peter better have one also."

"Your roses!" echoed she. "Do they have tobacco too?"

"They like it sometimes. Look and see," he answered, with a wave of his pipe toward the greenhouse.

The under-gardener stepped past him and opened the door, but in a moment came back, coughing and sputtering: "Oh, Mr. Trommel, it 's awful! Do the roses like that stuff?"

"It is not very good tobacco," he admitted, "but the roses do not mind. They use it only as a—a cosmetic; it kills the green fly that troubles them. I have but half a pound in a little pile burning on the floor."

"Flowers have queer medicines, have n't they?" said Mary, reflectively.

Herr Trommel nodded and puffed out a cloud of smoke.

"And you are sure the sweet peas are all right?" she began again, reverting to the object of her visit. "Don't they ever make a mistake? How do the roots know to go down to find something to eat when the leaves go up?"

"You must ask *lieber Gott* that question, little one. The roots are wonderful things: they are like little mouths, like fine little sponges, and yet they know how to take just what they need from the soil. How does the poppy, just by eating the brown earth and drinking and breathing, change from the tiny seed into the flower with the wonderful color? Those are things we must ask *lieber Gott.* If we put the seed in upside down, so that the roots come out of the little case on top, so soon as they are out of the shell, they know to turn and go down; and the leaves, if they came out below, they would know to turn and go up to find the light. When the *liebe Gott* shuts up all the flower in the tiny seed, he shuts up with it also a great deal of wisdom."

The under-gardener was listening intently. "Can plants think, like you and me?" she asked, with wide-open, astonished eyes.

"Sometimes, it seems, they think better," said he. "If you were all alone and very hungry, would you know that some one had left a basket with lunch away off at the corner of the street, behind the fence, where you could not see it? Would you know to go straight to it with your eyes shut? If you were very thirsty, would you know that the brook at the foot of the hill was dry, but that there was water in the well yonder? No; you would have to go look. But a tree would know; a bee would know also. That is what we call instinct. When these trees or flowers or insects do something we cannot do and cannot understand, we call it instinct.

"*Liebchen*, the more you live with plants, the more you have not only the love for the dear people but the great respect for their understanding."

"Then I won't look for the sweet peas till the leaves peek out," said the under-gardener, in an awed tone.

"I think the little ladies like it better if we do not disturb them until they are dressed and ready to come out."

He rose from his seat and went into the greenhouse. "I give my roses a little air," he said; "they have now enough tobacco.

"Come and see what I have for you in my border"; and he resumed his pipe as they walked along the narrow grass path. He stopped at a clump that looked to Mary very much like dead grass. "You must have some of this," he said. "Eh? You do not think it looks very pretty?" he asked, smiling at the little girl's disappointed face. "These are the old grass-pinks, little one."

"Oh, I know them," said Mary, brightening. "They are small, not like the big carnations."

"No, no. I think the big carnations would have nothing to do with these."

"Won't you hurt them, Mr. Trommel?" asked Mary, in alarm, for the old gardener had dug up the whole clump and began to divide it with his spade.

"No, no," he said unconcernedly; "it is better to move them in the fall, these perennials—they wake up very early; but these are yet asleep. The clump here, *Liebchen*, is a large family. The children are grown up, but they still live at home; they are big enough to be out in the world, yes; so we send some to grow in your garden. It is time these children should go to work for themselves."

"I think they will like it over in my garden," said Mary.

"I think they should," assented Mr. Trommel. "Let us see,"—he straightened himself and looked reflectively over the little border; "you shall have some phlox, yes, and rudbeckia; and by and by some of my hollyhocks. All these things we should set out in the fall, but if we try them now, perhaps they will be particularly polite to you."

"What is the phlox like when it blossoms?" asked Mary.

"It is better that you put the label beside it and then watch for what it is like. Besides, I have forgotten which one this fellow is. I tell you, little one, a garden in June is like one of those very exciting stories: there is always something happening, and you do not quite know what shall happen next.

"See, I set these pinks in one of our flats, and I put a little earth—that is, the covers—around the roots, so, and they will not know that we took them out of their own bed. You can bring over the little wheelbarrow and take them to their new home."

"I think I 'll get it now," said the assistant.

"Come first in the greenhouse a minute and see the fine hedge we shall have."

Mary ran ahead into the greenhouse, and hurried along the path to the bench where her domain was

marked off. There were the cuttings—a two-yard stretch of the greenhouse bench was filled with them. Two weeks ago the little brown sticks were like so many lead-pencils thrust in the sand, as evenly set as if they were tiny soldiers; now they were gay with tiny sprouting bright green leaves which each little cutting was thrusting out eagerly.

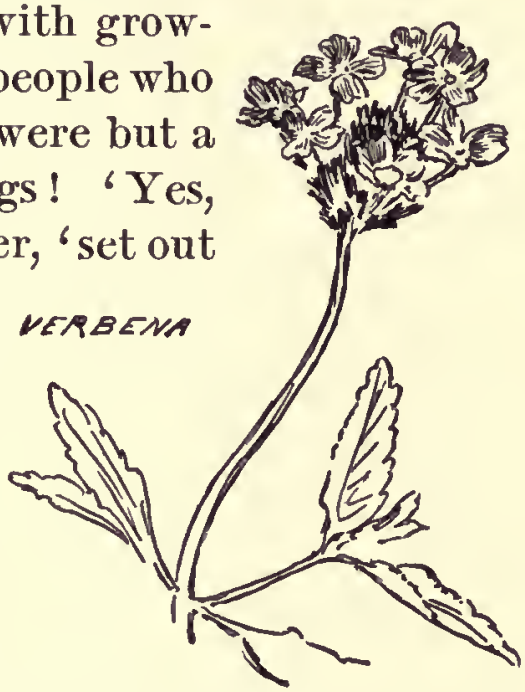
"Are n't they cunning!" said the under-gardener, ecstatically; "and they 're going to make a border all along my path, are n't they?"

Mr. Trommel nodded. "Next year, when you have grown a little more patience, *Liebchen*, we will have the box, but these little fellows will do well enough now."

"I think they 're lovely!" she declared. "Can't we plant them now?"

"Not yet, not yet!" said the old man, impatiently. "You are an American, my child, and it is not often that Americans are good gardeners; they will do everything at once. Yet I think you will make a good gardener; but listen!" and he held up an admonishing finger. "The good gardener waits, but also he is beforehand; he rushes, but also he goes slow. If you will make a garden because you like pretty colors and pretty things, or because the yard

looks bare, that is one reason. But if you make a garden because you love the plants and wish them to come and stay with you—that is a better reason. My child!" he exclaimed, with growing indignation, "there are people who think of plants as if they were but a sort of—of lawn furnishings! 'Yes, yes,' they say to the gardener, 'set out something.' Bah! he should give them things made of wire and colored paper — they will but look at them from the piazza. They should not have the dear flowers that are alive from the fine, wise little roots to the tips of the leaves and the edges of the pretty petals. It is as sad for flowers as it is for children to live with people that do not love them. Yes. And when the tulips have lost their pretty dresses, the gardener must rush and dig up the bulbs and put in geraniums — pansies — anything, but they must have a show. It is to make a summer hotel of the garden; the flowers know very well it is not their home. *Liebchen,* if I thought you would not care what became



of those grass-pinks, there, after they have finished blooming, I could not let them go away from home."

The brown eyes looked up earnestly at the gold-rimmed spectacles. "I will be very good to them, Mr. Trommel," she said.

"I know it, *Liebchen*," smiled the old man; "now run and get the little wheelbarrow."

CHAPTER X

PLANTING

[May]

THERE is no time to be lost on a warm May morning. So Mary thought, and she was busily at work in the little garden. A fat robin seemed of much the same opinion; he also was examining the ground attentively, but with an eye to breakfast.

"I suppose he 'd like to taste my sweet peas, even if they are n't cooked," thought Mary, as she poked drills into the ground with a chubby forefinger, carefully measuring the distances with the beloved clothes-pin.

It was no light matter to plant seeds without Mr. Trommel to say, "Yes, yes, that is right," and the white sunbonnet bent assiduously over the flower-bed, for the under-gardener must reach over the poppies in front to make the drills at the back of the bed by

the fence. "Three inches deep," she said to herself and the robin, who did not seem much interested, "and three inches apart, and afterward I shall have to thin them," she added judicially.

"Hello, little girl!" called a voice. Mary looked up so suddenly that the sunbonnet fell back from her head and hung at the back of her neck. A flaxen head had appeared over the top of the fence, and a pair of round, interested eyes were staring straight at her.

"Is it all buried? Was it a bird, and did the cat get it? or was it kittens, and did the grown-ups get them?" inquired the interested stranger.

"There is n't anything dead," said Mary, with dignity. "I am planting nasturtiums in my garden."

"Oh," said the stranger, respectfully, and relapsed into silence, though he did not descend from the fence.

The sunbonnet bent again over the brown earth, and seed after seed dropped silently into the drills. At last the under-gardener looked up. "Are you the new family in Marion Burroughs's house?" she asked.

The boy nodded. "We 've only just come," he said. "We used to live in New York. My name 's Randolph Findlayson Hadley. I 'm Donald Patterson's cousin."

"Oh,"—Mary looked at him with interest,—"I know Donald; he 's in my class. And what do they call you?"

The new neighbor hesitated a moment. "The fellows call me 'Finnan Haddie,'" he said ruefully.

Mary gave him a glance of sympathy and then went on with her planting. Already the row of freshly planted seeds reached half the length of the border.

"MARY . . . WENT ON WITH HER PLANTING"

"Just look at the way that robin runs and then cocks his head and listens," observed the new neighbor, changing the subject. "I wonder what he 's listening for?"

"He 's listening for his breakfast," explained Mary. "He can hear the earthworms eating the ground 'way down inside. Don't you wish you had ears like that? Mr. Trommel says it 's only the worms who stay up too late that get caught, for all the good earthworms are in their houses at daylight."

"Who 's Mr. Trommel?" asked the new neighbor.

"He lives over there," answered Mary, pointing to the long, low greenhouse, "and he knows everything about flowers and gardens and trees and insects. He is my most intimate friend," she finished proudly.

The new boy was all respectful attention.

"Mr. Trommel helps me about my garden," she went on, dropping another seed into its long, narrow pocket. Then she looked up with sudden friendliness. "If you climb over, I 'll show you the tool-house he made for me. Can you jump and not muss my border?"

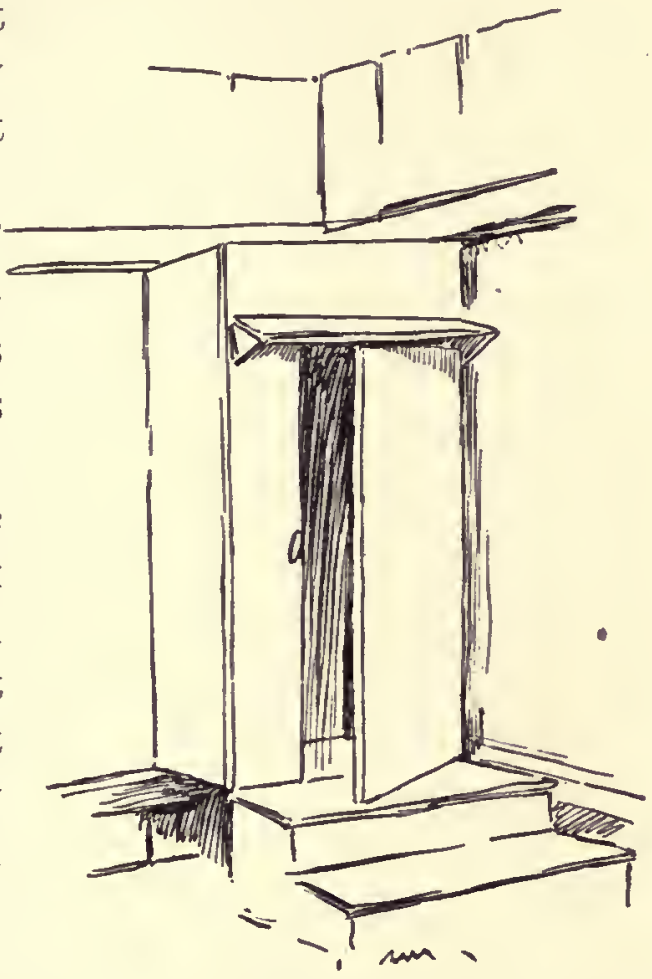
"Huh!" said the new boy, scornfully. "I can jump three of those little flower-beds. Just watch me."

But the under-gardener watched the feat with dignified unconcern.

"Don't step off the path," she cautioned. "I have sweet alyssum planted here at the edge. Here 's the tool-house, in the corner. It ought to be near the garden, Mr. Trommel says—that is, adjacent."

"'Adjacent' is n't a tool-house," said the visitor, with superior wisdom. "It 's a kind of general. I 've read about that in history. They have adjacent-generals."

"H'm!" said the under-gardener, somewhat distantly. "'Adjacent' means near; if they have 'adjacent' generals, that means they are nearly generals, but not quite."



"Perhaps that 's it," admitted the boy, reluctantly. "Say, it 's a cute little place, is n't it?"

"Mr. Trommel made it. We took a big box with a hinge to it, and then sawed the part that opened, so it would n't open 'way to the top, and would be more like a door, instead of having the whole side of the house open; then we stood it on end, and rested the lowest end on the beam of the fence, and then nailed it through the bottom to the fence. And afterward Mr. Trommel painted it green, and made the little steps, so it would n't look just pasted

to the fence. He put the little hood over the door, too. Is n't it cunning?"

She turned the wooden button and opened the door. "See the hooks inside? That 's where I hang my apron and my watering-pot. The shovel and other things I just stand up."

"Pretty nice," conceded the visitor; "I 'm going to make one like that for my garden, only mine 's going to be bigger."

"I like it littler; it 's—it 's more suitable," said the under-gardener, with dignity, closing the door of the small tool-house.

"Those are my sweet peas," she explained, "the ones coming up by the wire fence; and in front of them are ragged-sailors; over there are the poppies; and I have marigolds and sunflowers by the gate, and lots of things."

"What 's in the middle?" asked the visitor.

"A surprise," answered Mary. "Mr. Trommel is making the surprise now; it 's going to be made of wire netting."

"I know what it is, then," said the boy, triumphantly; "it 's a bed of tulips, with a little fence of wire around it. I 've seen those lots of times."

But Mary only smiled mysteriously. "Just you

wait," she said. "But it is n't tulips; you have to plant tulips in the fall. The things that wake up very early," instructed she, "we have to plant in the fall, because they don't like to be disturbed just before—before their performance: that 's what Mr. Trommel says."

"I 'm going to make a garden, too," declared the visitor, "but mine 's going to be all vegetables. I s'pose I 'll have to dig up the yard a little before I can plant the seeds."

"Dig it!" exclaimed Mary. "I should think you would! You ought to dig the beds two feet deep, and put in manure, so the roots will have something to eat when they go down. 'Top-spit' is nice, too," she added judicially, dropping another nasturtium seed into its hole.

"What is 'top-spit'?" inquired Randolph Findlayson, deferentially.

"Top-spit," said Mary, rising to explain, "is like this. When you dig up sod or things like that to make the bed, you knock off with your shovel the dirt that hangs about the roots, and you scrape off the bits of roots on the under side. Well, the dirt and the bits of dead roots that come off, that 's top-spit, and it 's extra nice."

"Top-spit and manure, and dig it two feet deep," repeated Finnan Haddie, dutifully. "How deep are you putting in those seeds?" asked he, for the sunbonnet bent again to the work.

"Three inches," she said; "but you must n't put everything in so deep. It is about three times the size of the seed, Mr. Trommel says, and most seeds are littler. But the sweet peas go in deep; that is because they are peculiar. What are you going to have in your garden?"

"Oh, radishes and lettuce and corn—and pumpkins, too, for Jack-o'-lanterns."

"That 'll be fine!" said the under-gardener, admiringly. "My garden 's just flowers; but I 'm to plant all the things in father's garden for him, and he 's going to give me fifty cents for doing it, and then I 'm going to buy some pansy plants. Father asked Mr. Trommel to get somebody to plant for him, and Mr. Trommel recommended me," explained Mary, with evident pride.

"Oh, my!" said Randolph Findlayson, much impressed.

The sunbonnet bent modestly over the flower-bed. "I don't know celery and 'sparagus and strawberries and those things yet, but father said just 'plain Amer-

ican back-yard vegetables' would do, and I could get what I liked; so I 'm going to have watermelons and radishes and lettuce and peas and beets, and I 'm going to plant them this afternoon all myself."

"Can I come over?" asked the boy.

"Yes, you come over," said Mary, hospitably, "and then you can help me fix the string. It 's rather hard to get it straight all by yourself. Mr. Trommel lays down a board; but a board is very heavy, so I take a string. You know, you must have the rows straight; it 's dreadful not to. There," she said, drawing a long breath, "my nasturtiums are all planted—two whole rows of them. Now I 'm going in. You 'd better come out this way, Randolph Finnan Haddie; you 'll muss my flower-bed if you try to climb the fence on this side. See my gate?" she said, as she unfastened it. "Mr. Trommel made it. By and by the sunflowers will be 'way up, bigger than I am, on each side. The gate is to make seclusion," she explained.

"Good-by," she said, standing on the steps of the piazza, as the new neighbor turned his face reluctantly toward home. "I 'm—I 'm very glad to make your acquaintance!"

CHAPTER XI

MAKING THE SUMMER-HOUSE

[May]

HERR PETER TROMMEL was very busy in his greenhouse, apron on and sleeves rolled up, but for once the plants were deserted. He was leaning over the potting-bench, a stubby pencil in one big hand, absorbed in his work on a paper before him.

At last he straightened his back with a little grunt of satisfaction. "Ha! that is right!" Then he chuckled to himself, "Peter Trommel, you old foolish one, you better go out for a children's nurse and let the plants alone!" Then he bent over the sketch again, regarding it with growing admiration. "But it will be a fine little garden-house!" he exclaimed. "I could not let that dear child have a thing of chicken-wire, and she was sure we must have a summer-house. This small latticed thing will be

easy enough to make—just lath, and four posts to keep it from upsetting; the *Herr Papa* will send the carpenter, and we shall have it all done while the little lady is away."

Then he returned to his figuring. "She is not more than four feet high. If I make the little house six feet, that should give plenty of room—the child will not grow that much more this summer; and if I make the door four and a half feet, that should be right. It is well to keep out the big people. Then I make the two doorways, one on each side, two feet wide; it will so look more like the little arbor and less like the box. Yes.

"That carpenter-man, that William, shall put in the upright posts. Then we shall have the four pieces to join them at the top; they should be 2x4. That is the framework. Then we shall put on the laths to make a lattice. We might make latticed sides and then put them up, so that the little house may be pulled down but not demolished. Yes!" He paused in his soliloquizing, and looked with pride at the rough sketch—the summer-house to be. "It may not add to the landscape effect, but it will make for comfort, and that is also something in a garden. If I could but make a tiny chalet! But to put it in an American

back yard—" He gave a little grunt of disgust. "It is not Peter Trommel that would do such wickedness!"

"Mr. Trommel—" The old man started guiltily and thrust the paper in haste within a capacious apron pocket.

"Good morning, good morning!" he said hastily.

"I came over to say good-by, Mr. Trommel. I 'm going away for a whole week!" announced Mary, delightedly. "Did you know it?"

"The *Herr Papa* said something to me of it," admitted Mr. Trommel.

"We are going away on business, father and I," she said with dignity. "He wanted mother to go, but she would n't, so I have to go and take care of him; there has to be some one, you know."

Mr. Trommel nodded appreciatively.

"Father says I 'm his 'second-best'!" added Mary.

"The second is one more than the first," agreed Herr Trommel. "I am glad the *Herr Papa* is to have so good superintendence; but the plants and I will miss you, *Liebchen!*"

"That is what is on my mind," said the under-gardener, growing suddenly serious and fixing troubled brown eyes on the old man's face. "Do you think

the garden will be all right for a week? The sweet peas and the poppies have gotten up, you know, and they 're growing! I thought of asking Norah to water them for me, but she might take a pail of water out to my garden and put it on with the mop! Do you think it is safe to go?"

Mr. Trommel laughed. "The little things may be lonesome, but they will not suffer; there are dew and rain, you know. *Lieber Gott* does not leave everything to you and me, or there would not be many pretty flowers in the world. Besides, the old Peter will sometimes take a look at the little garden."

"Would you truly, Mr. Trommel?"

"Truly," smiled the old man. "I sit here after supper, smoking my pipe; it will not hurt to stretch the old legs and cross the street and look over the fence. No."

"It would—it would be such a relief!" said Mary.

"It is a very small thing to do for a very particular friend," declared the old gardener, with a precise little bow, as he bade his fellow-worker good-by. "Take good care of the *Herr Papa*, little one!" he called, as the small figure reached the door.

The next day Mr. Trommel stood in the garden inclosure in the Maxwells' yard, wherein the

four posts had just been placed to his satisfaction, each one sunk nearly four feet in the ground. "I do not wish that the little house should upset, William," he said to the carpenter, who had turned in disapproval and was measuring for the frame-work.

There were clothes drying in the fore part of the yard, and every ten minutes Norah's bright red head appeared here and there among them—evidently she was anxious to find them dry; then she would walk toward the end of the yard and hang expectantly over the little garden gate. At the third visit she could wait no longer. "Whatever is it?" she inquired.

Herr Trommel fixed her with his spectacles. "My good Norah," he said, "it is a beautiful and interesting thing to watch what Time will bring forth. Sometimes it is quite surprising"; and he turned again to his work.

Norah went into the house with a "don't-care" toss of her head, this time taking the clothes-basket with her.

No sooner had the red head disappeared than the yellow head of the new neighbor popped up above the board fence. He watched in silence as long as it

was possible, while the carpenter sawed the cross-pieces and Mr. Trommel inspected the baby sweet peas.

"Say," he burst out at last, "are those clothes-

posts?—are you making a drying-yard? Or are they posts for horizontal bars? Is it a support for the pole you use in doing the pole vault? Perhaps it's for parallel bars, or—"

"Young man," interrupted Mr. Trommel, eying him with disapproving spectacles, "did you not learn at school that it is much better for the lungs that you breathe through the nose? Yes? And to do that you may find it necessary to close the lips. We must make great sacrifices for health."

The boy stared blankly for a moment, then relapsed into an aggrieved silence.

"I think you might tell a fellow," he said, after a few minutes.

Herr Trommel fixed scrutinizing spectacles on the round face under its thatch of yellow hair; then he suddenly relented. "I am but a cross old fellow, my lad," he said good-humoredly. "I do not like to be interrupted. We make here a little summer-house; these are the posts for it. You will not hurt the little garden if I let you come over and see what we do?"

"I won't hurt a thing," he promised eagerly.

"You see," said Herr Trommel, affably, "we make it while the little lady is away. We are now ready to put on the laths, to make the lattice. William," he said suddenly, addressing the patient carpenter, "you have that lath slanted too much. I wish the holes in diamond shape—not a long, pulled-out diamond.

"I am no architect, my lad," he said, turning to the spectator, "but I have observed that when a diamond or a circle is pulled out long up and down, it becomes solemn; it has a touch of melancholy—like when you make a long face. Yes. A building that is low and spreading will more probably look cheerful, while one that is squeezed and made very tall may look sad; at least, I think so."

The boy nodded respectful assent.

"Mr. Trommel, would n't you let me help? I could nail on those laths. We do carpenter work at school, you know."

"Shall we let him try, William?" asked Herr Trommel.

"Maybe 't would n't do no harm," was the carpenter's non-committal reply. "Begin at the bottom, young feller, and put them just where I 've marked—six inches apart."

"That is not so bad, eh, William?" observed Herr Trommel, judiciously inspecting the new assistant's work.

But the carpenter only grunted.

"I have a garden, too, Mr. Trommel," said the boy, rather shyly, after working in silence for some minutes.

"Yes? And what have you in it?"

"Mine 's all vegetables—peas and radishes and lettuce, and corn, too. It 's only just planted."

"No flowers?" inquired Herr Trommel.

"No; I have n't a very big patch."

"That is wrong," said Herr Trommel, decisively. "The *liebe Gott* did not make us all stomach; he did not make all the growing things to put in the

mouth; and even the things to eat he took trouble to make beautiful. You should have flowers in your garden to show the *liebe Gott* that you care a little for the pretty things he made—that you do not, like a baby, wish to put everything into the mouth; the flowers—they get into your heart, my child.

"I think, when we thin the plants here, we shall have some pretty things to pass over the fence," the old man added encouragingly.

CHAPTER XII

MARY LEARNS PRUNING

[May]

"I DO some pruning this afternoon," remarked Mr. Trommel to the under-gardener, who was swinging sociably on his gate; it is not always easy to go straight home from school.

"Suppose I come over and help you?" suggested Mary, eagerly. "I have a knife now."

"Certainly, certainly," assented the old gardener. "And how does the little garden?" he asked.

"Oh, everything's coming up: poppies and ragged-sailors and— What makes so many things look alike when they 're just coming up?" she asked, breaking off suddenly. "They all seem to begin with the two little round leaves."

"Well," said Mr. Trommel, "I suppose it must be because they are very little. Some people think very

little babies look all alike; they have much the same clothes. The fathers and mothers can tell their own babies when other people cannot. You cannot tell from a little baby what he will be like when he grows up."

"I must go home now," said the under-gardener, climbing reluctantly down from the gate. "Oh, Mr. Trommel, I almost forgot! Norah said she was going to make cookies this morning. If I can, I 'll bring you over some," she promised. "Which do you like better—the ones with the hole in the middle and the crinkled edges, or just round?"

The old man laughed. "I think I like the crinkled edges best," he said.

That afternoon Herr Trommel had just taken his pruning-shears down from the hook when his assistant presented herself. She held both hands behind her back. "I 've got the cookies, Mr. Trommel," she announced. "Which hand will you have? Choose."

Herr Trommel meditated a moment. "Let me see," he said reflectively. "I was to have the crinkled edges and the hole—yes. That should be the right hand. Ah, yes! *Prachtvoll!* I thank you, little one."

"I had the crinkled ones in each hand," confided Mary, "so you would be sure not to make a mistake."

"That was well. Tell the good Norah," he added, "that I have much enjoyed transporting her excellent cookies. Now, *Liebchen*, we must to work. Tell me," he demanded, fixing sternly inquiring spectacles on the assistant's astonished face, "tell me, my child, when would you cut back a shrub? Before it has bloomed, or after, or when the flowers are on it?"

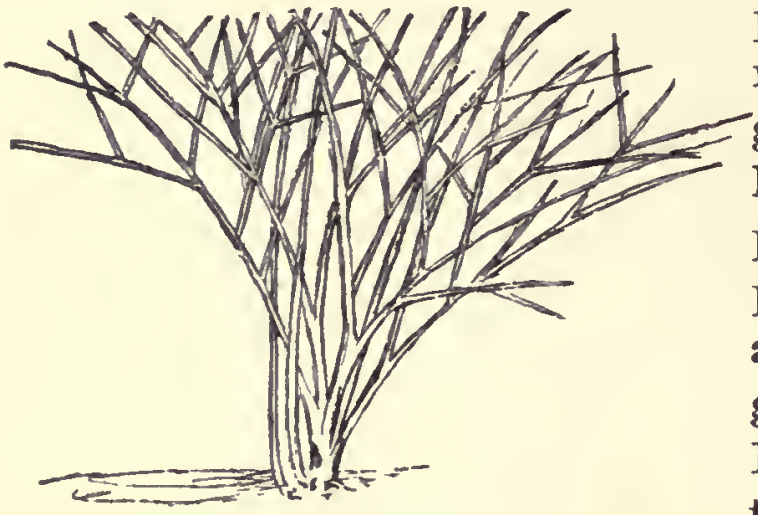
Mary hesitated a moment. "If it was very pretty," she said at last, "I think I could n't cut it until after the flowers were gone, or a little faded, anyway."

Mr. Trommel beamed approval. "That is right; a child knows that. But look in the next yard—those bushes just over the fence. He is a new fellow there. He has just this year come out from the city. It is possible that he may be a good man; but look at those forsythias! You know the forsythia?"

"The one with the little yellow bells?" asked Mary.

"Yes, yes. Now think of the wickedness, my child," said Mr. Trommel, pointing at the unfortunate shrubs. "The poor dears had been looking forward all the year to the pretty yellow Easter dresses, and see what he has done to them! Pruned them?

No! He has beheaded them! He has chopped their heads off just as they were about to look their prettiest. That man may be a good bricklayer; he may do well at pounding down paving-stones in a street. But a good gardener? Pah! He is no better than a mowing-machine!



SHRUB AS IT IS OFTEN PRUNED AND AS IT SHOULD NOT BE PRUNED

"Come, now, and I will show you how it should be done. This is forsythia too, but it is not so thick, not so stuffed at the base, as that poor thing across the fence; I have pruned it each year, that it might have air.

"Look, now, little one. Tell me what you think we should do first. What branches has the shrub that it does not wish to have?"

Mary regarded the shrub attentively; she walked around it; she even squatted down on the ground and peered up through the branches. "I think, Mr. Trommel," she said at last, judicially, "I think it

might like to have those dead branches taken away."

"That is right, that is right," said the old gardener, delightedly, as he cut them out. "See, we cut close to the stem, so we do not leave anything ugly. I cut it with the shears. Then I take my knife and make it smooth close to the stem. The forsythia would hardly know now that it had ever had a branch here.

"We have the dead stuff out; now I show you what we do next. You see these straight thick shoots in the middle of the bush?"

Mary bent and looked in. "I can see them, Mr. Trommel, growing straight up from the roots."

"Yes. When the shrub grows rightly, the branches spread more and more, and new little shoots come out on the older branches; that is the place for them. These things are upstarts: they come where it is not their place to come; they take the food from the roots which does not belong to them; they do not pay for it either, for they blossom but little. They are 'suckers,' and when you see a 'sucker' you should cut it out."

"Oh, I 've heard of 'suckers,'" broke in the assistant. "I caught a fish by that name once."

"And was it good?" demanded Herr Trommel.

"Father did n't think so, Mr. Trommel," replied Mary, regretfully. "He said, 'Did n't Donald know better than to let you bring home that old thing?' And it was the only fish I ever caught my own self"; and her face clouded for a moment with the sadness of the recollection.

"The *Herr Papa* was right," declared Herr Trommel; "if it had not been for the sucker in the pond, there might have been better fish for you. I have yet to see a kind of sucker that is good. When we find them on the shrubs we cut them out—*so*," he said with a little grunt, as he removed the offenders.

"Now is that one all done?" asked Mary.

"No, no, little one; that is the easy part. Now comes the—what you call it—the artistic work. Now watch closely."

"I can't watch any closer, Mr. Trommel!" protested the under-gardener, distressed and a little out of temper. "My head 's right up against the bush."

"*Lieber Himmel!*" exclaimed Herr Trommel. "Do not make an Absalom of yourself, *Liebchen*, on my poor forsythia. It is not a matter of nearness, but of sight. Stand behind me and you shall see easily what we do.

"I take this branch off; you see, it is in the way

of that one; besides, he should branch outward, where there is room in plenty, not inward, where there is little. The flowers can only come outside, where there is sun and air, not inside, where there is none. That is why we 'thin it,' we say."

"Let me cut one, Mr. Trommel," begged Mary.

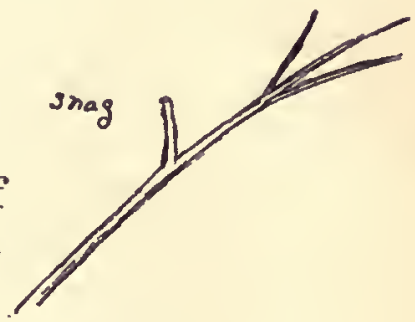
"Well, well," assented the old man, "it is only forsythia. You will need two hands for the shears, I think—*so*."

"That branch is bothering that one," decided the under-gardener, "and we take off the least prettiest one, don't we? and it 's an ingrowing branch, too."

Herr Trommel nodded approval.

"Do not leave a snag."

"What is a 'snag'?"



"A snag is where you do not cut off the branch close, when you cut it—so."

Mary shut her eyes in an intensity of effort as she brought the pruning-shears together. "I cut it close! But—it 's quite hard work, Mr. Trommel," she confessed, handing back the shears.

"That is a frequent difficulty with work, little one," admitted the old man.

"Now we do the last thing for this fellow: we shorten the branches and take off perhaps half the last year's growth. Perhaps," he said magnanimously, "this is what that poor fellow yonder,"—and he looked toward the butchered forsythias over the fence,—"perhaps this is what he thought to do. See, we make a slanting cut and leave the last eye on the outside—*so*."

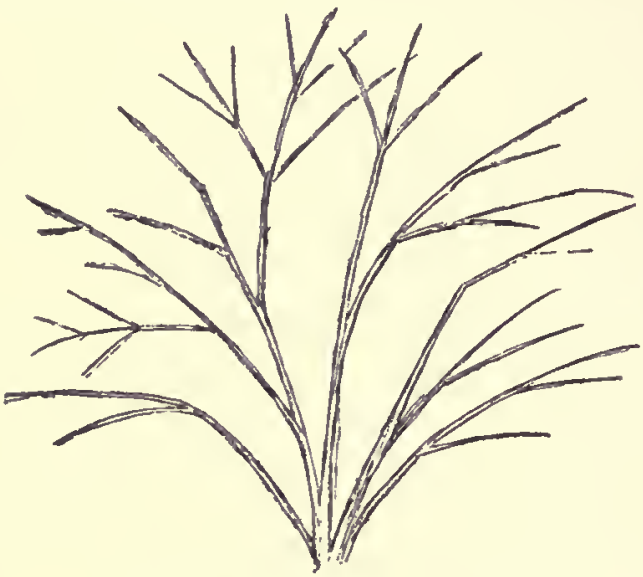


DIAGRAM OF SHRUB SHOWING "THINNING OUT"

"Why do you do that?" asked Mary.

"Why?" repeated Herr Trommel. "So it will branch out, not in; so that the leaves that are peeking out shall see outside and not look down the air-shaft, as my poor nephew does in the city.

"There, we are finished with that fellow," he said, straightening his back with a sigh of relief. "He feels very comfortable, and yet he is not hacked."

"It's too bad about those forsythias next door," said Mary, noticing the contrast. "They must feel like

the old woman who fell asleep on the King's Highway."

"The King's Highway?" said Mr. Trommel, perplexed for a moment. "Yes, yes, I remember; she was the old lady who had her dresses made short while she slept; yes, yes. It would be much the same feeling, I think; but I doubt not that the forsythias' dresses were prettier. Anyway, it is an unkind thing to do. We wait until the shrub is through with the pretty dresses before we take them away."

"What do we prune next?" asked Mary. "I know how now."

"We go now," said Mr. Trommel, walking ahead of his assistant down the narrow box-bordered path, "we go now to an invalid. This is my invalid," he said, stopping in front of a large Japanese quince.

"What is the matter with it?" inquired Mary. "It looks as if there was something wrong."

The old gardener shook his head sadly. "I think it has the nervous prostration, *Liebchen.*"

"Nervous prostration!" echoed his listener. "Oh, I know all about that! Mother had it, and Donald had it when he came back from college, and grandma had it, and Aunt Margaret has it now," she enumer-

ated proudly. "That was what father talked about when mother said I did n't practise enough and that I got very dirty in the garden."

"And what did the *Herr Papa* say?" inquired Mr. Trommel, politely, as he surveyed the invalid quince.

The under-gardener drew a long breath. "He said, 'For heaven's sake, Helen, let the child dig in the dirt; we have enough nervous wrecks in the family!' But I think he was not talking to me," she explained. "How did the quince get nervous prostration, Mr. Trommel?"

"Well," said the old gardener, slowly, "it has been working hard for a long time and blossoming very profusely; there have been many branches to take care of. Then, it has entertained too many visitors, for the insects all like to come; and then, the hard winter, that has nearly made an end of it. I say it has the nervous prostration."

"But what can you do when a shrub has that?" questioned Mary, in perplexity. "We put Aunt Margaret in a sanatorium."

"That is what I do with him. I put him in a—a 'rest-cure.'"

"But when mother was in a rest-cure, she had to

stay in bed all the time, and have massage, and she did n't have dinners or lunches, but all the time what the nurse called 'nourishment.'"

"Yes, yes; that is what I do to him."

"Oh, are you cutting it all down?" said Mary, in alarm.

"Down to the ground," replied Herr Trommel, resolutely. "That is the way I put him to bed. He will do little now for a year; the roots now have nothing to do but eat and rest—there are now no children to take care of. Then I give it good manure; that is the nourishment, and it should have plenty. And I stir the ground—that shall be for the massage. The roots will just take in,—take in and rest and grow fat and strong,—and next year there will be fine new shoots and flowers, and he will feel quite well again."

"I 'm glad of that, Mr. Trommel; but it looks now as if it felt worse than the forsythias over the fence."

"Perhaps he does," admitted Mr. Trommel, "but —I had to do it. That is his one chance of regaining his health."

"Why don't you ever prune him?" asked Mary, as they came to a fat, comfortable-looking yew.

Mr. Trommel snipped one or two protruding shoots. "The evergreens do not need it but only a very little. They are quiet folk. They do not put the pretty dresses on and off like the flowering shrubs. They get from the Mother Nature the strong, substantial clothes, and wear the same thing winter and summer. When they grow in July, they only put the fresh green leaves on the little new shoots; they do not have new dresses every spring. There is not so much cutting and fixing for them."

"I understand," said the assistant.

"Ah, you will make a fine gardener some day, little one," he said, as they stood at the gate. "Then perhaps you will have the great country place of your own, and your carriage—"

"I 'd rather have an automobile," interrupted Mary, giving the gate an energetic swing.

"The noisy, rushing things!" said Herr Trommel, disapprovingly. "Well, but you will have a gardener to plant and to oversee for you. Then sometime you will say, 'Michael, you do not prune that shrub right. Give me the shears. I will show you.' Then perhaps you will remember the old Peter who taught you how."

The gate stopped swinging a moment. "I 'll say,

'Michael, where did you learn such methods?'" said the under-gardener, sternly. Then she laughed. "I must go home," she said reluctantly; "but I've had a beautiful time."

CHAPTER XIII

A NEW IDEA

[May]

"MAY is a very busy month for us gardeners," said Mary to her father.

The two were walking together toward the railway station, for on Saturday mornings it was Mary's custom to see her father safely started for town. They were walking fast. Everybody in Brookside walks fast in the morning, for almost everybody is going to catch a train. Overhead the leaves were dancing in the May sunshine, and here and there on the different lawns azaleas made patches of brilliant color.

"Just look!" cried Mary, as they passed Judge Patterson's place. "Are n't they pretty? They have all those lovely colors just to show the tulips that nobody minds that *they* had to go away."

"Azaleas, are n't they?" said Mr. Maxwell.

"Yes. And I know the last name, too; it 's *Azalea mollis.* I suppose that means it 's Molly's azalea. That 's the way we say it. But when it 's a flower, you turn it round and say, 'azalea Molly's.'"

"I understand."

"My seeds are all planted, and your garden 's planted, too; and then I have to set out the things from the boxes; and then there is my hedge to plant; and the weeds have begun to grow, too," went on the small gardener; "and you know you have to pull up the weeds when they are little, because Mr. Trommel says it's better to—to—e-rad-icate evil when it is little than when it is big."

Mr. Maxwell laughed. "Don't you find it hard to know which is which when they 're all very little? Don't you ever eradicate a plant by mistake?"

Mary looked serious.

"It is hard to tell, and I 've made some mistakes. I eradicated some little plants that I thought were weeds," she admitted. "But—but that 's what Mr. Trommel says, anyway," she ended conclusively.

"School interferes very much with your regular work, father; and May is a *very* busy month for us gardeners," she said again. "And yet there is just as much to do at school as if it was February, when

there is n't anything else to do but go to school; and we have nature study now, too."

"Don't the private lessons in horticulture count off anything on the nature study?"

The under-gardener shook her head. "Oh, but it helps a good deal," she said, brightening. "Last week I wrote about 'suckers' for my composition, and Miss Bronson said it was 'very instructive,'" she repeated with pride.

"I should think it might have been. Can you keep a secret, Mary, and not tell anybody?"

"Of course I can.

'Honest, true, black and blue;
Lay me down and cut me in two'

if I tell," she repeated firmly.

"Well," he said, "of course you 'll do your best at school; but I promise I won't mind one bit if you don't bring home such very, very extra good reports as you 've had all winter."

"What!" gasped Mary, in astonishment. "You mean you 'd like me just as much if—if I did n't know anything, like Eleanor Thomas?"

"I 'd like you just as well," he said resolutely.

"And you would n't be horribly ashamed when

anybody says, 'How 's your little girl getting along?' and you would n't say, 'Why, Mary, I 'm surprised!' if Margaret pushed the door back at the morning exercises instead of me?"

"I think I could stand it, Mary," he said.

The under-gardener drew a sigh of relief. "Well," she said, "I 'm not going to the bottom of the class —that would be awful! But maybe I won't care so much if I 'm four or five from the best mark instead of having just Donald ahead of me. He has a garden, too.

"Oh, and what do you think we 're going to have? I did n't tell you, father."

"Can't imagine," answered Mr. Maxwell.

"We-ell," she began, "we 're going to have a gardening club, and nobody 's to be in it 'cept they have a garden they made themselves; and Miss Bronson 's going to help us start, but she is n't going to be in it, because she has n't a garden; and it 's going to be this afternoon at Margaret's, at the Juvenile Bug Association place."

"Juvenile Bug Association?" repeated Mr. Maxwell. "Oh, yes, I remember. It hibernated, I suppose, and has waked up in this form—is that it?"

"There 's the room now; you can see," said Mary,

pointing; "there in the big water-tower, next to the Dicksons' barn—see that little window half-way up the side? That 's the Bug Association's room. There 's Margaret now," she broke off suddenly, catching sight of something very like a heap of blue gingham on the Dicksons' driveway. "Ma-ar-g'ret!"

A head was raised above the blue gingham. "Oo-oó-oo!" responded Margaret, without rising from the game of marbles. (This means "good morning" or "how are you," "yes, I 'm coming"; it also means "wait a minute.")

"Ma-ar-g'ret!" called the under-gardener, again. "We 're all coming this afternoon, Margaret, and Miss Bronson 's coming too!"

"Mary, you come early!"

"I 'll be the first one!" promised Mary.

"Who 's going to be in your club, Mary?" asked her father, as they walked on.

"Oh, just us," answered Mary. "Margaret and I, and Donald and Mildred Patterson, and the Thomas twins, Buddy and Eleanor,—and Haddie, you know."

"Your friend next door?"

"Yes," said Mary. "I think we 're going to have lots of fun! Why don't you be a gardener, father? Then you 'd know everything, like Mr. Trommel,

and you would n't have to go to New York every day, and we could have a big greenhouse and a garden and everything!"

"I could n't earn enough at it to keep you in hair-ribbons, deary, for one thing; and, for another, I 'm afraid it was n't born in me."

"It was n't born in me either, father," she said, as she kissed him good-by, "but I can feel it growing inside of me!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE HORTICULTURAL CLUB

[May]

THE meeting-room of the Juvenile Bug Association was not as convenient of access as it might have been. The Dicksons' was an old place, and beside the barn stood a tall water-tower with a great round tank on top, built before water was introduced all over the town.

Outside, an enormously long ladder (which no one was allowed to climb) led up to the tank; but inside there was another, shorter ladder, by which you could reach the "second story," a rough, unfinished square room just under the great tank. This was the room of the Bug Association, which had died at last summer's end, and now the gardening club seemed likely to reign in its stead.

Margaret and Mary climbed the ladder and began

at once to arrange the scanty furniture. They had just moved the rough bench to a place against the wall on one side of the room and placed the unsteady table at the other side, when there was a banging on the ladder.

"Ma-ar-g'ret! Ma-ar-g'ret!" called a voice below, and the ladder rattled again. "Ma-ar-g'ret, can't I come up?"

Margaret went to the opening. "You go right away, Harold Dickson!" she called down sternly. "You go find Annie or mother or some one, or go play. You can't come up. You 're too little, and you must n't tag."

"I think you might, Marg'ret," and he gave the ladder a disconsolate bang.

"There ought to be two chairs," said Margaret, returning to her duties after having disposed of the small brother, "one for Miss Bronson and the other for the chairman. I 'll run in the house and get them, Mary; and then, when I come back, you let down the rope, and I 'll tie the chair on, and you pull it up."

Mary nodded assent. "You hurry, Margaret. They 'll be coming soon," she warned.

But before Margaret was back, the yellow head of

Randolph Findlayson appeared above the hole in the floor.

"Is n't this a fine place!" he said, looking around admiringly before climbing the remaining rungs of the ladder. The ladder reached only to the opening, so that it was necessary to enter the room of the Bug Association on your hands and knees. Then he hurried to look out of one of the windows. "Oh, they 're coming, Mary!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I can see 'way down the street. There 's Buddy Thomas, and Donald and Mildred Patterson. Yes, and there 's Miss Bronson, too. And who 's that with her? Eleanor Thomas? Oh, Mary, you are n't going to have *her?*"

Mary had stepped up on the bench, and was looking out, too. "There they are," she said. "Yes, that 's Eleanor. Why don't you like Eleanor, Randolph Finnan Haddie? I think she 's very nice."

"Oh, I don't know," said Randolph Findlayson, with masculine unreason; "her pigtails look like molasses candy, and she cries like a regular baby when you are n't doing anything to her."

But a noise below made Mary jump suddenly from the bench. "There! There 's Margaret back!" she exclaimed.

THE CLUB

"Ma-reé!" called the voice below; "quick, they 're coming!"

The under-gardener lowered the rope hastily.

"Let me pull it up, Mary. Oh, come on!" begged Randolph Findlayson, looking down through the opening while Margaret was tying the cord, making haste with small, unskilful fingers.

Mary handed over the rope, but the chairs and the hostess were scarcely up before the gardeners had arrived; one after another they came through the small opening, last of all Miss Bronson, who sat down on her chair and laughed and straightened her glasses.

"That chair is for you," explained Mary; "the other is for the chairman. Donald said we must have a chairman, and Margaret and I thought the members could sit on the bench. Now, how do we start?" she asked impatiently.

Miss Bronson was still a trifle out of breath from her trip up the ladder. "Are all the gardeners here?" she asked. "That 's the first thing to know."

"Mary and Margaret and Haddie and Bud and Eleanor and Mildred," enumerated Donald Patterson, the biggest boy; "yes, we 're all here, Miss Bronson."

"Then we must have a chairman."

"Donald," suggested Margaret Dickson.

"Who seconds the nomination?"

"I do!" said Buddy Thomas.

"Take the chair, Donald," said Miss Bronson. "Now you 're started, children!" she ended with a laugh.

Donald belonged to the boys' club at St. Andrew's, so he knew how things should be done. He walked over and took the chair by the unsteady table.

"Mary ought to tell us about the club, Donald," said Mildred Patterson, a pretty, delicate-looking little girl.

"Second her!" cried Randolph Findlayson. "Mary 's the one to tell us about it. It 's her club."

"Mary has the floor," announced the chairman.

The under-gardener looked down in some bewilderment at the boards whereon the feet of the assembly rested.

"We want you to tell us about the garden club, dear," explained Miss Bronson.

"We-ell," Mary began, drawing a long breath, "it 's just this. Last year we had the Juvenile Bug 'Sociation, and we caught butterflies and things, and this year we 're all making gardens, and I thought,

and so did Margaret and Donald, and—and Randolph, that we could have meetings and talk about how we did things. And I asked Mr. Trommel about it," she went on, drawing another long breath, "and he said 'Yes, yes,' and that we ought to have an exhibition at the end of the summer and invite everybody—like the Rose Show, you know, only not quite so big."

"Say, that would be nice," broke in Buddy Thomas; "and we could have medals, and charge admission, and then get some ice-cream for the society."

"But, Mary, what would we have to do at the meetings?"

Mary deliberated. "We-ell," said she, "my mother belongs to the League, and that 's the same as a club, and at the League they have papers, and then they all talk, and that 's 'discussion'; and then they have tea and chocolate and whipped cream and cookies, or those very nice sorts of wafer things that come in tin boxes; candy, too, sometimes, but you call it 'bonbons' then."

"Say, that 's nice," said Buddy Thomas, appreciatively, "all 'cept the papers," he added, "and that sounds like compositions."

"That 's so!" echoed Finnan Haddie, dispiritedly.

"Mr. Chairman," began Miss Bronson.

The chair recognized her in his most dignified manner.

"I want to tell the club," said Miss Bronson, "that you need n't be troubled about the papers. I can't let you drop the school work, you know, but we can arrange it this way: a paper which one of you reads before this club may be handed in for composition work, and any sketches or other work that you do for the club will count in with your nature study—if you bring them to school and let me see them. Then you will have the fun of doing the work for the club, and the papers here will help in the school work; for you won't mind my seeing what you do."

The club looked relieved.

"It will be ever so much nicer to write things for our own club than to write a composition," declared Eleanor.

"The exhibitions will be the most fun," said Buddy Thomas, enthusiastically, "and we 'll charge twenty-five cents admission and not just pins."

"But it won't be fair!" put in Eleanor, in an aggrieved voice. "Mary 'll have the best garden and the best flowers and everything. She has Mr. Trom-

mel to show her. It won't be fair for her to be in the exhibition, so there!"

The under-gardener's lip quivered. "Mr. Trommel did show me. He is my most intimate friend. But I did all the work myself," she began, rather tremulously, "and—"

"Of course it 's fair!" broke in the loyal Haddie. "Mary 's worked harder in her garden than anybody here, and she 's the littlest, if she is in our class! Mr. Trommel showed me about my garden, too; and Mildred's father helped her, and you and Buddy have got a gardener on your place to show you, Eleanor Thomas; so 's Margaret! And I don't care, anyway, if Mary gets all the prizes!"

"Good for you, Finnan Haddie! Eleanor need n't be so stingy!" said Buddy Thomas.

"I—I did n't mean anything, Finnan Haddie!" protested Eleanor, tearfully. "I—I only thought we ought to do our gardens ourselves. But—"

"The meeting will please come to order!" Donald rapped with his jack-knife on the table.

The meeting subsided.

"Mr. Chairman," said Miss Bronson, rising hastily, "I move that Mr. Trommel be elected an honorary member; he can then advise all the club."

"You second it, Eleanor," said Buddy, in a loud whisper, with a brotherly dig of his elbow into little Eleanor's fat ribs.

"Second him!" said the repentant Eleanor.

"The motion is made and seconded," said the chair, "that Mr. Trommel be made an honorary member. All in favor say aye."

"Aye!" chorused the club.

"The ayes have it," said the chairman, gravely. "Mr. Trommel is an honorary member."

"What else shall we do now, Miss Bronson?" asked the chair.

"We ought to have a name, and some by-laws, and decide something about the meetings — the next meeting, anyway. How would it do to go around the room and each one suggest a name for the club?"

"Gardeners' Club," said Buddy Thomas.

"Horticultural Society," said Mildred; "that 's what father belongs to."

"What 's that, Mildred?" asked little Eleanor.

"Why, it 's — it 's Rose Shows, and sometimes it 's pumpkins and flowers — and everything like that."

"It sounds nice and big, anyway," said Margaret. "Why could n't we be that?"

"Horticultural Club?" asked Miss Bronson. "Why, of course you could."

"Horticultural Club," announced the chair after each member had given an opinion. "All in favor—"

"Aye!" shouted the meeting.

"Now, there are the by-laws," began the chairman.

"What are by-laws, Donald?" asked Eleanor.

"They are the laws you have to mind," explained Mary, without giving the chair a chance to answer. "The laws you go by; that's why they call them 'by-laws.'"

"You might appoint a committee of three to make the by-laws, Donald," suggested Miss Bronson.

"Ma-ar-g'ret!" came little Harold's voice from below, as the ladder was banged by way of knocking (it was the only way you could knock at the door of the Bug Association's room).

Margaret rose instantly and went to the ladder. "Harold Dickson," she called, without opening the trap-door, "you can't come up here; you just go play!"

"Never mind! You'll be sorry if you don't let me come up, and everybody 'll be sorry. You don't know what I've got! And I can eat them all myself, so there!"

At this the trap-door opened and Margaret hastily went down the ladder. "He 's got some ginger cookies!" she informed the waiting and interested Horticultural Club. "Can I let him come up?"

But Buddy Thomas was already half-way down the ladder to aid the little fellow's progress.

"I did get up here anyway, Margaret," he said, sitting on the bench beside the members of the club, dangling his fat brown legs and sociably munching his molasses cooky.

But Margaret paid no attention.

"This is the way a club ought to end," said Mary. "Business, and then discussion, and then refreshments."

CHAPTER XV

SETTING OUT PRIVET CUTTINGS

[May]

"ARE N'T they fine?" said Mary, laying her "flat" on the empty sand of the bench beside her square of privet cuttings and looking admiringly at the prosperous young shoots.

"Very fine," agreed Herr Trommel, without looking around.

"Now we dig away the sand," remarked Mary, distinctly, for Mr. Trommel's back was turned on the operation, "and we begin at the side where there is n't anything, and then we dig underneath—so! I'm undermining them, Mr. Trommel," she explained. "The roots must be tangled in the sand, and you know that when you 're having your hair combed it does n't hurt so much if people will only begin and comb out the ends first."

"I had forgotten, *Liebchen*, but undoubtedly it is true," responded he.

"So that 's why I am undermining these," continued Mary, working carefully with her pointed stick, "and then they just drop out, so, without being pulled. And then we lay them in the flat, one on top of another, with their heads against the one end, and the roots in the middle, where nothing hits them."

"That is right," said Mr. Trommel, glancing over his shoulder as he sprayed his plants.

"Plants are queer, are n't they, Mr. Trommel?" observed the under-gardener. "They don't mind having their heads bumped a little; it 's the feet you have to be careful of. Now mothers are always telling you not to get your feet wet, and it does n't hurt the plants a bit. Do you suppose it 's the vegetables we have inside of us that make us like to get our feet wet?"

"I have never thought of it, *Liebchen*, but it may be true. Young children are also fond of soil as well as of getting wet. That may also be the vegetable in us. And how does the little garden now?"

"It 's growing," she replied. "You ought to see how big the poppies are! And the sweet peas are growing, too. I 've filled in the trench, and the

corn-flowers and mignonette and the phlox—everything is growing as fast as it can."

"And have you thinned them?"

"Of course I've thinned them," said Mary, proudly, "and I gave Haddie some of the thinnings."

"That is good."

"And I thinned the lettuce in father's garden yesterday, and he gave me ten cents for doing it. I think father does n't like gardening. He says he does n't want to hurt the business of the market-gardeners. But the radishes came up all right, and the peas are growing. They look just like my sweet peas."

"It is the family resemblance," said Herr Trommel; "but the peas in the *Herr Papa's* garden have to earn their living, while those you have are the fine ladies with the pretty clothes.

"It will soon be warm enough now to set out seedlings. Every day the last week that was fine weather I have put them outside. I give the babies an airing. You should set the boxes outdoors for a few days, then the little asters and hollyhocks can see how they like it there. It makes the change easier for them. The first night you better set the boxes inside the little arbor. That will be a shelter for them."

"The seedlings in the boxes are a lot of bother, are n't they, Mr. Trommel?" said the under-gardener, with a sigh.

"I think so. I rather have the perennials in my garden—the things you plant the year before. They will bloom for you year after year, as the shrubs do."

"Now my privets are all ready!" said Mary, as the last cutting was laid in the flat.

"Have you the little fellows all laid straight?"

"Look!" said Mary, proudly, lifting the wooden flat and showing the cuttings piled as regularly as if they had been asparagus stalks for the market. "I did n't sqush them, and I did n't break one root."

"*Prachtvoll!*" said Mr. Trommel. "Now run and plant them, *Liebchen*. I have other things to do, and you are so fine a gardener you do not need that Trommel show you how. Are you not now of the Horticultural Club?"

"Mary!" called the neighbor from over the fence, as the wheelbarrow with its load of baby privets was pushed carefully through the garden gate.

"Good afternoon," she responded, scarcely looking up, for the red wheelbarrow had a very precious

freight; the flat was piled high, and the little cuttings might tumble.

"My seeds are all planted, and the beds are marked, too!" said the neighbor with evident pride. "Come over and see them. Can't you?"

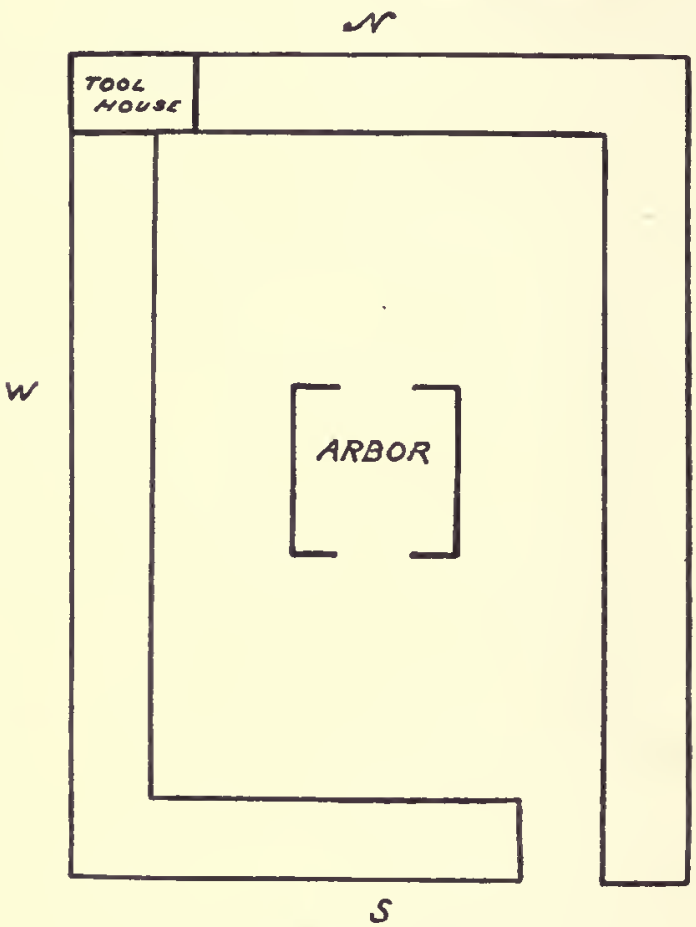


DIAGRAM OF GARDEN

"By and by," answered the under-gardener, with a slight air of importance, "but I can't leave these cuttings now."

"What are you doing?"

"Would you like to come over and help, Finnan Haddie? You can if you like," she said generously.

"I 'm going to make an edging of these," explained Mary, judicially, when her neighbor had

climbed the fence. "Box is what you ought to have, but I could n't get that, so Mr. Trommel showed me how to make these. He says it will do this summer, but that next year it will be a hedge and not a border."

"They are cunning little things," said her fellow-gardener, admiringly, holding up one of the "green-leaved babies."

"Don't touch the roots, Randolph Finnan Haddie," warned the under-gardener, quickly. "They don't mind having their heads mussed a little, but we have to be very careful about the feet."

Mary's small brown fingers busied themselves a moment with the piled-up cuttings. "There!" she said, holding a thick bunch of the little privets between her hands. "Now dig a hole for me, please, Haddie, over there,"—and she nodded toward an unoccupied bit of flower-bed,—"big enough for these bunched up so."

The boy did as he was bid.

"Now we put them in, so, and cover the earth over the roots, and then they will be quite comfortable while we plant the others."

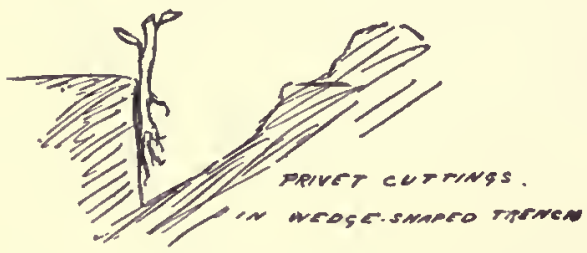
"What do you do that for?"

"We don't *have* to, but the roots like to be in the

ground, just as flowers like to be put in water. I saw Mr. Trommel do this once," she said conclusively. "It 's 'heeling in.' "

"Are you all ready to put the others in?" asked the assistant.

Mary nodded. "Don't you see my trench? The marking-string 's there, too. Mr. Trommel said to leave the string until I had the edging planted."



"I'll hold the plants," suggested Randolph Findlayson, "and you push the dirt around the roots. It 's easy to get them straight with the string there. I 've got him right against the string, Mary."

"And he must be in just as deep as he was before," said Mr. Trommel's under-gardener, in her most professional manner, "or it interferes with his breathing —that 's what Mr. Trommel says. But you know," she confided to her assistant as she covered the roots of the little privet plant, pushing and poking the earth with small brown fingers, "when we first made the cuttings, I put one of them in the sand upside down, and it grew! And when I asked Mr. Trommel how it could breathe that way, he said privet was

like some babies: that it would grow, no matter how —no matter how ignorant its parents were.

"Gardening is very peculiar," she said, as she took the watering-pot and began to soak the new arrivals; "just after you learn things, you have to learn how many times they are n't so."

CHAPTER XVI

MR. TROMMEL VISITS THE GARDENS

[May]

THE Horticultural Club had assembled at the house of its honorary member, or, to speak more strictly, was hanging over his fence.

"You go ask him, Mary," urged Vincent Thomas. "Maybe he 's forgotten he was going to see our gardens to-day."

"Go on, Mary," begged Mildred, adding her persuasion.

The under-gardener, nothing loath, pushed open the gate, went up the narrow box-bordered path to the greenhouse, and the Horticultural Club watched from the fence until their president disappeared behind the low white door.

Sure enough, there, at the end of the house, was Herr Trommel, his sleeves rolled up, busily unpack-

ing a box of plants and quite oblivious to his engagement with the Horticultural Club. He looked up from his work as the door opened.

"Good morning, good morning," he said, although it was afternoon.

"Oh, Mr. Trommel!" said Mary, fixing reproachful brown eyes on the old man's face, "are n't you coming to see our gardens to-day?"

Herr Trommel looked at her for a moment in mild surprise. "*Lieber Himmel!*" he exclaimed, suddenly laying down the plant he held, "I was to look at the little gardens, and here I was, even being so happy with my new shrubs." He sighed deeply. "But wait a moment, *Liebchen*, until I make these dear things comfortable, and I will come with you. I must put back the wet hay over their roots, so—and tuck their feet in, so they shall not get dry. They will be safe now until I come back"; and he followed Mary reluctantly down the greenhouse.

"What place must we visit first?" he asked, taking his hat from the peg beside the door.

"I suppose we 'll have to move and second and all that!" replied Mary, resignedly; "the club 's here, you know."

"What!" he exclaimed in surprise, as he opened

the greenhouse door and caught sight of his fence. But he recovered himself directly. "Ha! good afternoon, my young friends! I am most happy to make acquaintance with the—the Juvenile Bug, of which you have made Peter Trommel a member! It is an honor! Yes."

The Horticultural Club looked pleased.

"Now let 's go to Margaret's," said the energetic president; "that 's the nearest!"

"Stop!" said Mr. Trommel. "Wait but a moment, little one! I must have straight your Juvenile Bug Society."

"It is n't Juvenile Bug, Mr. Trommel," corrected Mary; "we're the Brookside Horticultural Club now."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Trommel, nodding impatiently; "if you are a horticultural society it will not be long before you have to do with the juvenile insects. Which one is this?" and he fixed inquiring spectacles on Buddy Thomas, who grew suddenly abashed.

"That 's Buddy—Vincent Thomas, that is; and that 's Eleanor standing by the fence," said Mary, turning to Buddy's sister, who in her turn was embarrassed by Mr. Trommel's scrutiny, and thrust first one then the other small brown shoe between the pickets of the fence.

"Yes, yes; Wingate Thomas's twins. Go on; I have them. And that?" he continued his inquiry.

"That 's Mildred—and Donald," she went on, rapidly introducing the club, "and Margaret and Haddie and I. Now you know us all."

Herr Trommel scrutinized the club attentively.

"Yes, now I have them; let us go. Shall it be your garden first, my child?" he asked, turning to Margaret.

And the Horticultural Club and its honorary member started down the walk—Margaret beside Herr Trommel, Eleanor on his other hand; for Mary, careful on this occasion to avoid an air of proprietorship, was following with Finnan Haddie; the others went on ahead.

"It is not often," observed Mr. Trommel, becoming affable and beaming on the Horticultural Club, "that I have walked with such fine accompaniment."

"I planted some beets," remarked Buddy Thomas, turning to speak to the honorary member, and walking backward that he might not delay the procession, "but they have n't come up. What do you suppose is the matter?"

"That I cannot tell, my lad, until I see what you have done to them."

"And I transplanted some jack-in-the-pulpits and they all died," put in Eleanor, looking up at Mr. Trommel as she trotted along beside him. "What made them?"

"I've got lettuce and radishes and corn and chrysanthemums in my garden," said Margaret, eagerly. "What can I do to make them come up very quick?"

"I've got all those things in mine, and pumpkins besides to make Jack-o'-lanterns of. How soon will they be big enough?" broke in Donald, for the Horticultural was rapidly recovering from its momentary shyness.

"*Ach!*" exclaimed Mr. Trommel, "I cannot answer so many questions at once. Wait and let us see the little gardens one at a time, and then we can perhaps find what is wrong with them.

"Um-m-m," he said reflectively, as the club ranged itself around the square patch near the vegetable-garden which confined Margaret's horticultural efforts. "You are too crowded here. The lettuce, the little mignonettes and sweet peas all should be made thinner. Also the ground is hard; it is not worked enough. You should rake and hoe twice a week surely, and keep the ground light and loose about the plants. Have you anything else?"

"Corn," answered the owner; "but it did n't come up. What do you s'pose was the matter?"

"When did you plant it?" demanded the honorary member.

"Oh, ever so long ago."

"Then it was too early. Corn will not grow until the weather is hot. It likes to start as soon as the little kernels are in the ground. If we put it in very early and they have to wait long, they often become rotted. This year also we have had much wet. The middle of May is quite soon enough for here. If you lived South you could plant much earlier. Here you might plant even in June or July for late ripening. You must plant again.

"But the garden needs exercise—yes. Also perspiration from the owner. Still it might be a good little garden. Now let us see another."

"I 'm next," said Eleanor.

"There is n't very much in my garden," she confided to the honorary member, as she trotted along beside him. The other Horticulturals had gone on before.

"That is not to your discredit, my child. A little garden well kept is better than a large one that is not kept at all."

"This is mine," said Eleanor, leading the way to the foot of the yard. "That 's Buddy's over there. There 's just nasturtiums in mine."

"That is well," said Herr Trommel, affably. "Then you shall be the specialist. You make the specialty of nasturtiums."

Eleanor looked pleased and smiled at the Horticultural Club. "I'm going to have pansy plants by and by."

"The soil is not rich; it is a little sandy. That will not hurt the nasturtiums, but the pansies would like more to eat. Sunflowers, yes, and mignonette do not mind eating little; portulaca also would enjoy itself here."

"I asked father to buy some manure for the gardens—Eleanor's and mine," said Buddy; "but he said the gardens would n't amount to anything and it was just a waste of money. You see," added Buddy, ruefully, "we 've had a garden before."

"Then this summer you must show the *Herr Papa*

what a fine gardener you can be with but little help, and then next year he will wish to establish you in the business.

"I tell you, mine young horticulturists, the plants will do more for some one who loves them much and works for them, but yet has little to give them in the way of extra delicacies, than they will do for one who gives them all the food they require and then leaves them alone and does not care. You know, the iris loves the water and the wet places—yes. Well, I have never seen iris of more beautiful color than some which grew on top of a hill. They had a hard bed that was but gravel with a thin blanket of earth over it. There was little water for them; but the gardener cultivated and cultivated and *cultivated* them," he said, with emphasis. "I have seen larger iris many times; but a more beautiful color? No! So much can be done with perspiration.

"It has been a great pleasure, mine young friends," said Mr. Trommel, beaming down on them, as they left the little gardens and went together toward the gate.

"Oh, but you have n't seen all the gardens yet, Mr. Trommel! There 's Donald's and Mildred's and—"

"Have I not seen three? Did you not say three?"

"There were only three places to go to that you did n't know," explained Mary. "Margaret's is one, and Buddy's and Eleanor's is two, and now we are going to see Mildred's and Donald's; that 's three. Mine and Haddie's you know, so they don't count."

"I comprehend. It was the—the arithmetic that confused me. I did not multiply correctly."

The Horticultural Club went two by two along the path under the tall trees, which shaded but slightly. The maple blossoms were strewn on the broad flagged walk, leaving the winged seeds high up in the tree behind them.

Mary brought up the rear with Mr. Trommel. "You have n't seen Mildred's garden," she said to her companion; "it 's very—very interesting."

"I doubt not it is a fine little garden, and Judge Patterson's is very near. There is always much for which one may be thankful, *Liebchen*." He fetched a deep sigh. "It is good to have pleasures near," he added hastily.

"Not so bad," said Herr Trommel, surveying Donald's little garden, "but I do not like the beds built up, made higher than the paths; the water runs off, and also it is apt to wash the plants away that

are near the edge. I do not like it. You will have some fine poppies."

"Ought n't I to transplant them?" asked Donald.

"Transplant poppies!" said Mr. Trommel, in a shocked voice. "Transplant poppies! You can transplant pansies, if you will. They do not mind; indeed, they rather like it, as these foolish people who will go to one place for a little while in the summer, and then to another. But poppies—no, no! We are but coarse, big things, and the poppies hate that we touch them. Now, is there yet another garden?"

"You have n't seen mine yet, Mr. Trommel," Mildred said.

They went around to the other side of the house, past spiræa that was white with bloom, to a large horse-chestnut-tree, its trunk encircled by a low seat.

Herr Trommel sat down on the seat, took off his hat, drew from his breast-pocket a large handkerchief, and wiped his forehead.

"It is a fine little garden," he said.

"It is over by the fence, Mr. Trommel," objected Mildred.

"Yes, yes; tell me what you have in it, and I can see better from here. I see lilies-of-the-valley."

"Those are n't mine. See here, and here, and

here," she said, pointing with her foot in the grass, quite near where Mr. Trommel sat breathing peacefully.

"They are violets," said Herr Trommel. "Did you plant them?"

"I brought them home from the woods."

"They are growing nicely. Ha! you have several kinds," he said, growing interested.

Mildred nodded. "I think that's the Canadian violet," she said. "It has n't bloomed yet. And I've some of those long-stemmed ones that are colored almost like pansies."

"And jack-in-the-pulpit! Did you bring him in, too?"

"Yes; and I have some anemones, but they've gone by—and trillium."

"And the ferns? One, two, three, four kinds I see."

"Yes."

"The little garden does you credit. My child," said Herr Trommel, "you can transplant well; it is a fine accomplishment."

"What else could I plant in it, Mr. Trommel?"

"I would keep to the wild things, and bring them home yourself. I think it is better to plant them and let them live than to kill them and dry them and

mount them most beautifully. That is, I think so. I think the flowers like it better, also.

"You might have the Japanese anemone. It would quarrel with nothing here. Pansies also would grow for you, but they would not be happy with the wild things. The myrtle—the little *Vinca minor* with the blue flowers—would be better."

"Mildred ought to put manure on, ought n't she, Mr. Trommel?" said Mary, in her professional manner.

"No, no!" Mr. Trommel spoke quickly. "A little garden like this better have leaf-mold from the woods; that the wild things understand."

"What is leaf-mold?" inquired Buddy Thomas.

"It is—leaf-mold," answered Herr Trommel, impatiently. "It is when the leaves drop to the ground and are dead and soaked with rain. Another year—what they are become then—that is leaf-mold. Now, mine young horticulturists, I must go home. It grows late; also I have other things to do. You say I need not to-day inspect your garden and the lad's next to you?" and he turned appealingly to Mary.

"Oh, no," said the president. "You know you 've seen those; but if you 'd like, Mr. Trommel, Haddie and I would n't mind being inspected."

"No, no; I shall not trouble you," he said positively. "I have had a very instructive afternoon and a very pleasant. Yes!"

"We 'll all go home with you, Mr. Trommel," said Eleanor.

"These two," indicating Mary and Randolph Findlayson, "they should be accompaniment enough."

"Oh, we 'd like to go," assured little Eleanor.

"Well, well," assented Mr. Trommel, "you have two very fine things in your society—the zeal and the devotion. Yes!"

CHAPTER XVII

SETTING OUT SEEDLINGS

[May, last week]

"I 'M not going to ask you to help me, Mr. Trommel, because I belong to the Horticultural Club now; but I 'm going to set out my seedlings, and if you would like to come over and sit in my arbor, I 'd — I 'd feel a little safer. Are n't you tired?" added the under-gardener, solicitously.

Herr Trommel was busily at work with shears in one of his borders. He was clipping the lower leaves from hollyhocks that were beginning to shade some little seedlings, but he straightened himself and laughed.

"You think the little asters feel better if I — what you call it — chaperon a little?"

"Yes, that 's it," said Mary; "but what are you doing to the hollyhocks?"

"I am not hurting them, *Liebchen.* I just cut off a few of these great leaves at the bottom; I do not like to do it, but they shade my little things here in front of them. Besides, it will not show; they will not feel bare or unclad."

He bent again to his work. "In five—ten minutes I shall come. The lady mother will not mind that I bring my pipe? No? It is good for a garden to have a pipe smoked in it."

"Everything will be ready," declared Mary, "and then you 'll just—just watch."

"The garden looks very fine!" remarked Mr. Trommel, as he came through the gate, which was none too wide to admit him. "The larkspur will bloom for you soon—just one or two spikes; next year you will have plenty. The young ones are growing well."

"See!" said Mary, showing him the seed-bed in the corner. "Look at the little larkspurs and hollyhocks—they are coming up; and then in the fall we move them to where they are to grow, don't we?"

"Yes," said Herr Trommel; then he stooped under the doorway of the little arbor.

"Now, *Liebchen,* I shall sit here and smoke my

pipe and admire the sweet peas and the poppies that are coming on so finely. You have a good day for transplanting. It is cloudy and somewhat damp. The little plants will like it. You shall set them out, and I shall not look until they are all in the ground, and then I shall come and admire. That is what you wish, is it not?"

"Ye-es," assented the young gardener, doubtfully, as she sat down on the grass at the edge of the flower-bed beside the flat of young asters.

"It 's easy enough after the first plant 's out, but it seems quite hard to take the first plant out without hurting anything," she observed after a moment's silence. "A trowel 's too big to put in the box; there is n't any tool just—just suitable."

"There is a flat pot-label in my pocket," remarked Herr Trommel to the sweet peas; "I have known it to be convenient."

"I think I will try a pot-label, if you have it with you," said Mary. "Could n't you poke it through the lattice?"

This implement seemed to be successful, and there was silence for a few minutes. "You make the hole deeper than the roots are long," remarked the under-gardener, after Mr. Trommel's fashion; "that

is so the roots will not have to double up their feet. And — and then you put the earth around it carefully, so not to hurt them. And then you press it down, and the little aster must be in just as deep as he was before, or a very little deeper. Now I 'm going to make another hole about — about four inches—"

There was a cough from Mr. Trommel which interrupted the soliloquy. "Perhaps six inches would be better," amended she; "it is better to give too much room than too little."

"Oh, Mr. Trommel, do look and see if these are all right; you must n't tell me how, but just look!"

"The little plants are set out well," said Herr Trommel. "They are straight, they are well apart. Now, if you but wet them thoroughly they will be quite happy."

CHAPTER XVIII

MARY IN MR. TROMMEL'S GARDEN

[June]

"I JUST love your garden, Mr. Trommel!" declared Mary, enthusiastically, her brown head bent over the dainty columbines. "I think it 's nicer than anybody else's garden. Somehow the flowers seem more friendly here, as if they liked to have you come and see them."

"Perhaps they know we love them, little one. See those tulips and narcissi there at the edge of the border, by the shrubs? They were done blooming long ago, but this is their home. They know I will not disturb them nor trouble them, or put others in their place. They know I love them all the year round, even when they are curled up in the brown bulb, sound asleep."

"The columbines are n't asleep. Just see how they

are dancing. But they will have to go away soon. They are beginning to fade now. Perhaps that is why they are dancing so hard—like Cinderella just before the clock struck twelve." She passed down the path and stopped by the larkspurs. "He 's splendid, is n't he?" said she, pointing to the big spike which reached almost past her shoulder, "and the only one out. I know what he says, Mr. Trommel."

"Yes? And what does he say, *Liebchen?*"

"He says, 'Oh, come on, you slow-pokes! Look at me! I 'm out. And it 's beautiful, beautiful! I can see all over the garden. You 'll miss the little columbines if you wait any longer!' That 's what he says," she ended, with a little laugh. "Now I 'm going to see how big your sweet peas are, Mr. Trommel. Mine are almost up to the bottom of my dress."

The old man watched affectionately the little gardener's figure as it passed between the two old apple-trees to the open space at the foot of the yard; then he left staking his pyrethrums and followed.

"They look beautiful," she said, turning to face him as he stood beside her. "They are 'most as big as mine. Won't they blossom soon?"

"Let us see," said Herr Trommel, reflectively, taking off his cap and passing his hand thoughtfully over

his bald spot. "This is now the 6th. They should begin to bloom, perhaps, the end of the month.

"The roses," he mused, "ah, they are the loveliest, I know, but sometimes I think the sweet peas are the dearest. Already you see how the fine little tendrils hold the wire. At the end of the month they will be holding tight, tighter than ever, for the blossoms have then their wings. So the pea-vine holds tight with the little green fingers when the bees come and talk to the pretty flowers and tell them how nice it is to go visiting. I think she is afraid the pretty children will fly off."

The under-gardener was listening intently. "Did you ever see a sweet pea run off with a bee, Mr. Trommel?"

"No," he admitted; "but you know my eyes are old. Besides, I have spectacles in front of them. When you come to wearing spectacles, *Liebchen*, you sometimes cannot see the things that you could without."

"Then perhaps if I watch," said the assistant, with

wide brown eyes fixed on the old man's face—"but I think a sweet pea would rather fly off with one of those little white butterflies than a bee; they look more as if they belonged together—more suitable."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Trommel; "you see many wonderful things if you watch for them. Shall I tell you another thing?"

"Oh, yes!" said the under-gardener.

"Well, then, look out for the bees. They are not so good as some people think they are. I have caught them stealing."

"Stealing!" echoed his listener, in an awed whisper.

"Stealing!" repeated Herr Trommel, firmly.

"Why, I thought they were very good, and worked very hard, and were very, very industrious."

"The bees—they are tramps," said Herr Trommel. "They go to a flower for honey, and the flower does as all good people do with a tramp: it says, 'Yes, I will give you something to eat, but you must work for it.' So the bee has his honey. Then he carries away a load of pollen-dust for the flower, and takes it for her to another flower—that is, when the bee does as he should."

"But when does he steal?" asked the brown eyes.

"That I will show you. Come with me over to the

"'HERE IS A BIG FELLOW COME TO STEAL. WATCH HIM!'"

rhododendron here, and you shall see some of his badness. Do you see the brown spot there at the base of the flower, on the outside, just where the sweet is?"

Mary nodded.

"Yes; that is where the bee has broken in and taken his breakfast without paying for it. He should have gone in at the front door instead of breaking into the pretty house like that. Ha! Here is a big fellow come to steal now. Watch him! See, he does not even try to go inside."

Sure enough, the bee was buzzing contentedly at the base of the flower in his most businesslike manner. In a moment he went singing away, leaving a small hole—the mark of his misdeeds—behind him.

"You see," said Herr Trommel, severely, "if he could not get inside, he should know that the sweet was not for him; the flower was perhaps saving it for some pretty moth. What he could not get in the right way he took in the wrong way. No, they are not so good, those bees. They *buzz, buzz,* to make you think they are working very hard; but they are gossips and matchmakers and busybodies, and it is all getting, getting, and more than they need. I think the *liebe Gott* likes the flowers just as well.

They do not talk about what they are doing. They just grow and are lovely, as the *liebe Gott* meant they should be.

"Did you ever see a bee who has eaten more sweet than is good for him? No? I have seen him on a thistle-top when he has made himself so sick he could not stand—yes!"

"But if he did not feel well, that was a lovely place for him to go and lie down," said the under-gardener.

BEE
TAKING HONEY FROM OUTSIDE
OF RHODODENDRON

CHAPTER XIX

TRANSACTIONS OF THE HORTICULTURAL CLUB

[June]

ONE after another, the members of the Horticultural Club climbed the ladder and came through the trap-door to the room of the Juvenile Bug Association, for it was almost time for the third meeting of the club.

"We must have a chairman," said Margaret Dickson, who was very businesslike. "You have to nominate some one and then second him."

"I don't like that way, Margaret," objected Mary. "All that seconding and moving takes lots of time—let's count out! You can count out, Eleanor."

The Horticultural Club obediently ranged themselves in a circle. Eleanor began at once:

"'Eeny, meeny, miny, mo.
Catch a nigger by his toe;
If he hollers, let him go!
Eeny, meeny, miny, mo!'

You 're out, Buddy!

'Eeny, meeny, miny, mo—' "

she began again, when Buddy had withdrawn from the possibility of chairmanship.

By this method of selection the honor fell to Margaret. With an air of importance, she went at once to the seat by the table, and pounded with vigor to call the meeting to order.

"There are three papers for the club to hear," she announced. "Mr. Randolph Hadley will read his first."

"It 's ladies first," said Randolph Findlayson, gallantly.

"It 's age first," said Eleanor, wriggling in her chair in momentary embarrassment.

"Then it 's Mildred," said Donald Patterson, "because she 's age and ladies both."

"Be quiet, children!" said the chair, sternly. "The chairman is like the teacher when you play school, and I 'm Miss Bronson. Now, Randolph," she said sweetly, "we are ready to hear your paper."

Finnan Haddie rose at once.

And the club listened to the following essay:

"TOADS

"A toad is a very useful animal to have in a garden. A toad is a quadruped, because it has four legs, but it sits chiefly on its hind ones.

"A toad is a familiar object, although many times you do not see him when he is there. This is because he looks so much like the mud or the ground that you do not notice him. Toads are very useful in gardens, because they catch and eat insects which are difficult for us to catch. They also do not have anything else to do, so they can spend all their time in this useful occupation.

"Toads are better than anything else for catching slugs. A slug is like a snail when its shell has been smashed off. Slugs leave a trail of wet behind them, and they eat up sweet peas and everything else in the garden; but the toads eat them up.

"It is very interesting to see a toad catch flies. He sits perfectly still, as if he were a stone; then, when he sees a fly or an insect, his chest puffs in and out, as if he were fanning himself inside. Then he keeps perfectly still, so that the

fly will think he is a chunk of mud, but when it is near enough he snaps it. You would not think he could make such a quick jump for it, but he does. I have eight toads in my garden, and have not been bothered much yet with slugs. People say that toads make warts on your hands. They have n't made any warts yet on my hands, but anyway I would rather have warts on my hands than bugs on my flowers."

"I think toads are nasty things," objected Eleanor.

"Eleanor," said Mary, "that is only a—a prejudice. Toads are *very* useful."

"You 're wrong about one thing, Finnan Haddie," said Buddy Thomas. "A toad does n't jump. I 've watched them lots of times. It just shoots out its tongue so quickly that you can scarcely see it, and it has something sweet and sticky on the end of its tongue that catches the fly, like sticky fly-paper. That 's the way he catches them."

"But *I* never saw any slugs!" objected Eleanor.

"Of course you have n't seen them, unless you were up very early," replied the essayist. "They come out at night."

"That 's 'because their deeds are evil,'" remarked

the under-gardener. "But I 've seen slugs in the daytime, Finnan Haddie. Once I lifted a board, and there were lots of them under it—wet, nasty-looking things. Mr. Trommel says that if you make a little circle of lime around the plants, a little way from the stem,—it must n't touch that,—the slugs can't cross it."

The chairman pounded on the table. "Children!" she said sternly, "this is not the time for talking. Discussion comes afterward. Eleanor will read us her paper. Stand over here, my dear, and be careful to read slowly."

Eleanor gave two or three little giggles of embarrassment, and then began:

"THINNING SEEDLINGS

"Thinning seedlings is a process which seems sad, but it is necessary. It is sad because so many of them die. They most often die when they are the kinds which do not like to be transplanted. We have to thin plants, because if we don't do it, the little plants are too crowded, and then none of them are any good. Mr. Trommel says they get to quarreling for their bread and butter, so we must separate them.

"When you start seeds in boxes it is only a little while before your trouble begins. As soon as two or three leaves have formed you have to begin to thin them. You take out the little plants in between until those that are left are two or three inches apart. This is when they are growing in the house. When they are growing outdoors you do likewise.

"Then you think you are done thinning, but you are not; you have to do it again. Pretty soon the leaves are near each other and the little plants grow bigger. Then you take out the ones between until they are six inches from each other, or, if they are in flats, you have to pot them. You can plant them out of doors if it is warm enough.

"A nice way to move seedlings, when they are out of doors, is to take a tin box. The kind that saltines come in is very nice for this. Then you put a little water in it, and then, just as fast as you take the seedlings out, you put them in the box with the roots down and the heads up. Then the roots don't get dry and the little plants are moved very comfortably.

"You must take hold of a seedling just where the roots begin. If you take them up by the top, sometimes the stem breaks and then it becomes dead."

"That was a very instructive paper, Eleanor," remarked the president.

"I know a way to transplant things when you have n't any tin box, and you have to bring them a long way, too," said Mildred. "I 've brought home jack-in-the-pulpits and violets, and they did n't die, either!"

"I brought home some, too," asserted Margaret—"but mine died," she added, after a moment's hesitation.

"You have to dig them up carefully, of course," explained Mildred, "and you *must n't pull.* If you have a knife along it 's easy. I always have a knife and a piece of string in my pocket.

"Then you find a piece of moss and put it around the roots, and then soak it."

"The dirt inside?" asked Buddy.

"Of course," said Mary. "It 's like Hiawatha's mittens—he put the skin side inside and put the fur side outside. The mossy side is the fur side."

"And then you tie it. If you can't get moss, take mud and make a ball with the roots inside—"

"I know that way," said Margaret. "It 's in the 'Girls' Handy Book.'"

Mildred took no notice of the interruption.

"Then you put them in your hat and bring them home."

"Does n't your hat get all dirty?" asked Eleanor.

"It 's 'most always an old hat, but you can put leaves inside if you 're afraid; and if you cross the elastic and put it underneath the crown, it holds lots!"

"It 's time for the meeting to go home," said Margaret, impatiently.

"A meeting does n't go home," said Donald; "it adjourns. Some one has to move—"

"But are n't there any—any refreshments?" asked Buddy Thomas, disconsolately. "It says in the by-laws—"

"We have beautiful refreshments to-day," announced the chairman.

"Oh, Margaret, are the cherries ripe?" cried Donald.

"Oh, *Ma-ar-g'ret,* why did n't you say so before? And we 've been up here all this time!" said Eleanor, in an injured tone.

But the chairman did n't hear, for the Horticultural Club was going down the ladder as fast as possible.

CHAPTER XX

THE POPPIES

[June]

"DO come over and see my poppies, Mr. Trommel!" begged the under-gardener. "There was n't one bud open yesterday! They were bent over, hanging their heads down. And this morning there are one, two, three, four poppies—oh, they are lovely! Pink, with a little white edge, and red; there 's à red one that is—*stunning!*" she said impressively.

Herr Trommel was on his hands and knees, devotedly weeding his border. "Eh?" he said. "The poppies have come out? Then we must go and look at the pretty ones." He stood up.

"But I knew last evening there would be a surprise for you to-day," he said as they walked along the path to the gate.

"How did you know?" asked Mary, surprised.

"Um—well, the poppy buds looked as if they were thinking of coming out; the little heads were beginning to straighten upright. The poppy does not hang her head when she blossoms. No, no!"

"There!" exclaimed Mary, as they stood in front of the dainty poppies that were swaying on slender stems.

Herr Trommel looked down on them in silence for a moment. "They are lovely," he said reverently; "they are fairy things; they are color made alive!"

"Were the petals all inside of those green buds?" asked the under-gardener.

Herr Trommel nodded. "The poppy is not at all careful of her clothes, although she has such pretty ones. The roses curl their petals very carefully, but the poppy's petals are just crushed tight together inside the hard green bud. She is not afraid of wrinkles—no. If you are out very early, *Liebchen*, you might see the poppy open; but you must have the sharp eyes. You see the bud; then, if you look away but a moment, there is the flower! The green case—the calyx—has split and dropped to the ground, and the petals that were crushed so tight are lovely, as you see them now. It is a wonderful thing."

"Poppies don't look a bit sleepy, do they? But is n't there something in them that makes people sleep? It seems to me—" said the under-gardener, wrinkling her forehead reflectively.

"They make something from the poppy seeds that brings sleep," said Herr Trommel.

"Where do the poppies get it from?" asked Mary.

"Where do they get it from?" repeated Mr. Trommel. "Ah, I tell you! What was the fine young lady that slept so long?"

"Rip Van Winkle slept a long time, but he was n't a young lady. Oh, Brunhild? Was it Brunhild?"

"No, not Brunhild; it was a relative of hers."

"Sleeping Beauty?"

"Yes, that is the one — where everything stopped at once, and all the palace went to sleep."

"And the hedge grew up so thick that the prince could hardly get through!" said Mary.

"Yes; well, there were poppies growing in the garden there. You know how light and little a poppy seed is, how easy for it to be carried by the air?"

"Oh, yes! Little tiny things. We had to mix them with sand, you know, so they would n't get lost."

"Yes; well, just as the young lady fell asleep, and

the sleep charm passed over the palace and over the garden like a breath of wind, a tiny poppy seed was in the air, and when it dropped, it dropped not in the garden, but over the wall and away. But the little seed had heard the charm, and when it grew up to be a poppy it whispered it over and over to the little seeds until they learned it. That is how the poppy seeds know the sleep charm. But not all the poppies know it, for although they grew in the garden there, it was only the little seed that dropped over the wall that remembered it. The flowers in the garden, you know, were all put to sleep."

"Did n't they remember it when they woke up?"

Herr Trommel shook his head. "They were very sorry, but they knew nothing of what had happened; no more than the Van Winkle you spoke of."

The under-gardener was silent a moment.

"Do toads and other things that sleep all winter eat the poppy seeds to make them go to sleep?"

"No," said Herr Trommel, "I think not. You know they might not be able to find them when they wanted to go to sleep. But animals and insects and plants, *Liebchen*, are sensible folk and can always go to sleep when it is the right time. It is only men who have forgotten how and must get the pop-

pies to help them. Yet I have seen a bee take a piece of a poppy's petal to line her baby's room — perhaps that the little one should sleep very sound. Monsieur Karr has seen this also."

"Mr. Karr?" repeated Mary, puzzled.

"Yes, Monsieur Alphonse Karr. The gentleman who spent a year in making the tour about his garden."

"How did it take him so long?"

"Um — well, I have been fifteen years in my garden, and yet I have not seen it all."

"I should think," said Mary, doubtfully, "that a poppy petal would be rather large for a bee to carry; you know, birds can take only a little piece of grass or other things. Besides, I thought bees lived in a hive and made cells out of wax," she objected.

"Um — yes. But there are other kinds of bees. This bee I tell you of makes a little chamber in the ground; and after it is nicely hollowed in the ground, it is not quite to her

taste, those earth walls. You have seen the little round pieces cut from rose-leaves? Yes? Well, sometimes the bee, as I said, cuts pieces out of the poppy petals and covers the walls with the fine crimson. Also she mixes together a little honey and pollen dust from the flowers and makes a little pile of the bee-bread in the pretty chamber. That is for the little fellow to eat before he is become a bee. Then she hangs a little curtain and makes ready the place for another egg."

"Perhaps the bee puts the poppy petals and the pollen inside so the baby will know what to do for a living when he comes out a bee," suggested Mary, "so he will know the flowers and the pollen when he sees them."

"Perhaps," admitted Mr. Trommel; "but insects do not have to teach their children anything. They know everything they need to know as soon as they are insects."

"That must be very—very convenient," sighed the under-gardener.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLUB IN MARY'S GARDEN

[July]

"YOU are sure you can't come to the meeting? Are n't you well, Mr. Trommel?" asked Mary, anxiously. "You know it 's going to be in my garden."

"Um—yes, I am quite well, *Liebchen*, but I fear I catch too much enthusiasm and activity from a meeting of your society; it would not be safe at my age. No. It is much better that you come over and tell me about it. Thus I get the benefit of the society without that I have so much excitement.

"You have the little garden looking fine now. It is well to have the young horticulturists see it."

"I weeded out every little weed this morning, so they would n't see one. I 'm president of the club, you know."

"It is a great responsibility," said Herr Trommel, sympathetically.

The under-gardener nodded. "I always think of it in church when they say, 'Bless thy servant the President of the United States, and all others in authority.'"

Mr. Trommel coughed.

"What is it you discuss this time?"

"My paper 's on watering."

"I should like, indeed, to hear that," said Mr. Trommel.

"And Buddy Thomas is to read a paper too. When you 're a club or a society you say a 'paper,' but it 's just like a composition," explained the under-gardener. "Those we have written this summer we are saving to hand in at school in the fall."

"An excellent plan," commented Mr. Trommel.

"You 're sure you can't come?" said Mary, turning back reluctantly as she stood at the gate.

"No, no! I shall have a far better understanding if you come and tell me."

Certainly the little garden was looking its prettiest. The sweet peas were abloom and the nasturtiums were sturdily climbing toward the top of the fence.

The color scheme might be a trifle confused, but who would care for that? The phlox was blossoming, in white and pale pink and red, and it had not the slightest objection to the deep-blue corn-flowers opposite, nor the nasturtiums on the little arbor, nor the fragrant mignonette at its feet, nor the tall yellow sunflowers at the gate, which seemed to be chaperoning the little company.

"There is something doing all over the garden," said Randolph Findlayson, enthusiastically.

The two were in Mary's summer-house, awaiting the coming of the rest of the club.

"Now we must begin," said Mary, as the last of the Horticulturals, Buddy and Eleanor, came through the gate. "There is n't room for us all in the arbor,—it is n't as big as the Juvenile Bug room,—so we 'll have to sit on the grass. It 's Mr. Hadley's turn to

be chairman," she added with dignity, "and the chairman can stand in the arbor. There is n't a chair—there 's only a bench, but that will do; that 's all that judges have to sit on, father says."

"What have you put on your sweet peas, Mary?" asked Margaret, who was investigating the garden.

"I have taken up that—that subject in my paper," said the president of the club, with dignity; "it 's a mulsh."

"What 's a mulsh?" asked Eleanor.

The under-gardener hesitated a moment. "Mulsh is a covering," she said. "Sometimes when it is very hot, Eleanor, I have just a sheet over me at night; sometimes a blanket, or very thick blankets, or a down quilt. Then I am mulshed. You cover the ground over a plant's feet with manure—that is 'mulsh'; or you put dead leaves, and that is 'mulsh'; or you put clippings that the lawn-mower makes to keep the flowers' feet cool, and that is a 'mulsh.' That 's what I did to the sweet peas."

But the chairman was in the small summer-house, and rapped with his jack-knife on the table. "The meeting will please come to order."

The meeting sat down on the grass with alarming promptness.

"Buddy and Eleanor Came through the Gate"

"We will first listen to a paper by—by our honored president," said Randolph Findlayson.

Mary rose at once and proceeded to the summer-house. "My paper is about watering," she said.

"WATERING

"The best way to water plants is not to water them; that is, you dig the flower-bed very deep, then the roots can go down and keep cool and find something to drink. This makes them self-supporting. My nasturtiums do not get as thirsty as my sweet peas. I don't know why this is, except that they are born so. Lilies and irises are more thirsty than poppies or mignonette; this also is because they are born so.

"It is not good to water when the sun is shining, because the sun drinks up the water before the flowers have a chance to. It is n't good, either, to give just a little water every night; that is just like only washing your face and hands and never having a bath. Nobody's mother lets you do so, and we must n't allow plants to grow up that way, either.

"Plants drink all over, just like they breathe all over; so when you *do* water you must just soak and

soak and soak them, so that the leaves are all wet, and the water goes 'way down to the roots. Next morning you work over the ground with a rake or hoe. When the earth is loose on top, and looks as if it had n't been wet, the sun does not notice that there is something he can dry up, so the water does not e-vap-o-rate so fast. That is what a mulsh is for.

"Yesterday, because there had n't been any rain for a long time, Mr. Trommel showed me how to water my sweet peas. You make a little trench between the rows, fill it with water, and let them drink it up; then fill it again, and they drink that; and do it once more. Then put back the dirt; and over that I put grass-clippings an inch deep to make more mulsh.

"Spraying the leaves also washes off the insects. When plants are strong and clean the insects do not go for them so much as when they look thin and are not feeling well. This is mean in them, I think, and reconciles me to having some insects killed, although Mr. Trommel says they are often hard-working fathers and mothers of large families."

"I watered my garden every single afternoon," said Margaret—"that is, when I first had it," she added.

"I don't care," asserted Mary. "Mr. Trommel says it is n't the best way; that if you begin to do it you just have to keep on and water and water and water, and you can't leave your garden at all, and that the sooner the plants take care of themselves the better; that way the plants just get a little every day and don't ever have a good drink. He says it gets them into very bad habits."

"I know another good way of watering, when there 's a drought," said the chairman. "You scoop out little basins around the plants, and fill them with water two or three times, till the roots have had all they want to drink, and then fill up these holes with dirt. This is something like mud-pies; it 's very good fun.

"Who 's got another paper? You, Buddy?"

"I 'm not going to read my thing," declared Vincent, with sudden modesty.

"Got to," responded the chairman, firmly and briefly.

"It 's the laws of the Horticultural Club, Buddy," said Eleanor, cheerfully. "*I* read a paper last week, did n't I, Haddie?

"He can't have any refreshments if he won't read his paper, can he, Mary?" continued the chairman, turning to the hostess.

"No!" said the president, relentlessly; "not a sandwich."

At this the unwilling member arose and read as follows:

"WEEDING

"Mr. Trommel says weeds are plants which happen to grow where you don't want them.

"There are many kinds of weeds. Whichever kind you have the most of in your garden seems the worst, especially plantain.

"I have had a great deal of trouble with plantain.

"I think this is called plantain because it is always planting itself where you don't want it. It is also called hen-plant: this is either because the hens are the only people who like it, or because it can make almost as much trouble in the garden as hens.

"Most of the weeds have unpleasant names and sound as if they ought to be pulled up. There are pigweed and ragweed. The

pigs eat the pigweed, like the toads eat insects; but it would not do to let a pig in your garden to eat up the pigweed; it is better to pull it up yourself. Pigweed and ragweed grow very tall. Knot-grass is also a weed. It does not grow as big as pigweed, but it can make just as much bother. It is called knot-grass because it has roots that seem to tie themselves in knots with the roots of other things and are very hard to get all out. Knot-grass has a little pink flower that is very pretty. Purslane is another weed. This does not sound like a weed, so sometimes people call it pusley. It has a little yellow flower that shuts up very early, but you must dig it out of your garden. Weeds should be pulled out when they are little; then they cannot grow big."

"There are more kinds of weeds than you 've told

about, Buddy," commented Margaret. "I 've got chickweed and dandelions and smartweed and witch-grass in *my* garden," she enumerated proudly.

"Then you ought to get your hoe and dig them out just as soon as you go home, Margaret," advised Finnan Haddie; "and smartweed 's just the same as knot-grass, anyway."

"Hoeing is n't the best way to weed," said Donald; "you just cut off the tops and don't get out the roots that way. I get down on my hands and knees and pull them out."

"I know a better way than that," asserted Mary; "you just lie flat down on the grass in front of the bed and lean on your elbow, and then you can pull out every little weed. When it 's quitch-grass, you have to follow up the roots with your hands."

"It would be nice if some animal would just eat up the weeds, like the toads eat insects for us."

"Mr. Trommel says," observed Mary, "that if you weed and weed and weed when the plants are little, then the flower gets a head-start and you don't have so much to do by and by."

Mary's yellow-haired neighbor lingered after the other small guests were gone.

"I think we had a beautiful meeting, Mary! I wish we could have them here every week."

Mary nodded. "It was a nice meeting," she said; "but there won't be any more for a long time—everybody 's going away. We 're going, too, next week, Haddie. Did you know it?"

"Wish I could go, too," he said.

"It would be very nice," agreed Mary.

"I 'll look over your garden for you sometimes, Mary, and see that the toads don't run away; but—" he hesitated, "but the garden won't be half so nice," he ended regretfully.

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN MARY WAS IN THE COUNTRY

"AND did you have a fine time in the country?" asked Mr. Trommel of the under-gardener, who was sitting opposite him on his little porch.

"Um-m-m! Beautiful!" said Mary, appreciatively.

"And what have you learned?"

"Well," confessed Mary, modestly, "I did n't learn so very much, but I taught Kenneth ever so many things."

"That is even more pleasant," said Mr. Trommel. "It is better to give than to receive instruction."

"And I drove the hay-cart, Mr. Trommel; and once I rode horseback on one of the oxen! Did you ever try that?"

"No," he said, puffing at his pipe. "You see, I might not fit."

"But the best fun was roping hay."

"Roping hay?" repeated Herr Trommel.

"Don't you know *that?*" asked Mary, in surprise.

Herr Trommel shook his head. "I do not know it. Tell me, *Liebchen.*"

"Well," began Mary, drawing a long breath, "Dorset is all hills. Part of the way up the mountain it 's hay-field, and beyond that it 's cows. And it 's *very* steep. You 'd think the cows would n't dare to do anything but stand up ; that as soon as they began to sit down, they would roll right down the mountain—but they don't. And almost every morning there are big clouds sitting down behind the barn."

"Perhaps they are caught on the top and roll down as you think the cows might?" suggested Mr. Trommel.

"Perhaps," admitted Mary.

"But how did you rope the hay?" asked the old gardener.

"That 's what I 'm telling you about," said Mary. "First you make windrows—you know what windrows are? When the grass is all cut with the mowing-machine, then it 's hay. Then they take a horse-rake and drive down, and the hay collects in the big curved teeth ; and every once in a while the man

pulls a handle and the teeth fly up and the hay drops in a kind of long pile—that 's raking. Every time he comes to one of these rows he pulls the handle. And when the hay is raked it 's all piled up in long rows—those are windrows. If you are going to load the hay on the wagon, you pile up the hay in the windrows and make it into mounds—those are haycocks. You don't do that when you are roping it."

"It is the roping I wish to hear about," said Mr. Trommel.

"But I 'm telling you as fast as I can," declared the under-gardener, a little aggrieved.

"Excuse me, little one; I interrupt the story. Go on."

"Well," said Mary, drawing another long breath, "when the hay is all in windrows, and you see them taking out the horses without any wagon, you must run as fast as you can, for they are going to rope it. The horses are all harnessed, but they are n't harnessed to anything except the cross-bar that you fasten the long leather pieces to—the—"

"The whiffletree," suggested Mr. Trommel.

"Yes, I think that 's it," said the under-gardener, judicially; "and *that* is fastened to a long chain, and one horse is fastened to one end and one to the other,

ROPING HAY

and then they begin at the bottom and drive them up past three or four windrows; and then one horse stands still and some one holds him, and a man drives the other horse, just walking beside him and holding the reins—that way,—to the other end of the windrow."

"I see; and the chain is on the upper side."

"Yes. Then they drive the horses down the slope and toward each other, too, and the hay collects in a big bunch, and the chain holds it, and you sit on it, and it 's—beautiful! The last trips are the nicest ones, for the hay is 'way up and you have a long ride. It 's—it 's extremely interesting," she said.

"Um," said Herr Trommel; "I should think it might be. I did not know that method. I have learned something."

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. TROMMEL TEACHES THE ART OF BUDDING

[August]

"THE little Horticultural Club is not dead, I hope?" said Mr. Trommel to the under-gardener, who had come to call.

"Oh, no, it is n't dead," said Mary. "You see, I was away, and Mildred and Donald are away still; it 's just—just resting."

"I bud some young apple-trees to-morrow," remarked Herr Trommel, casually. Then he puffed at his pipe in silence.

"What 's budding, Mr. Trommel?" asked Mary, immediately interested.

Herr Trommel set floating a great cloud of smoke. "It is like grafting," he said; "only different."

"Oh!" said Mary, and was silent, while Herr Trommel puffed at his pipe.

It was late in the afternoon, and the two were sitting on the broad door-step, for it was Herr Trommel's hour of shirt-sleeved meditation.

"Do trees like to be grafted?" asked Mary, after a few minutes. "Do they always like to grow to be something different?"

"No," he said; "sometimes they do not like it at all; sometimes they show you very plainly what they think. But it is life; it is education. Do you remember that eglantine of Monsieur Karr's? No?

"Well, then, this eglantine was grafted with a fine sort—"

"I know how you do that!" broke in his listener; "and you put the grafted place a little way under the ground so the suckers won't come up."

"Yes, yes! you have a fine mind, but you should not interrupt. This eglantine did not wish to be a grafted rose and have very fine flowers. He liked better his own little roses. Yes.

"So he sent up a shoot. The gardener said it was but a sucker, and he cut it off.

"He sent up another shoot, but the gardener cut that off. And again and again—until he found it was no use.

"Then he sent his roots far along under the ground,

and there, on the other side of the fence, where the gardener could not see it, came up a fine strong shoot, a little eglantine, just like its papa.

"Then the graft, the adopted baby, grew weak and thin and the little eglantine grew fat and strong. Because why? The eglantine was treating the graft as in the fairy stories the wicked stepmother treats the child that is not hers. All the food—everything—went to the baby on the other side of the fence.

"But the gardener did not know this. He was troubled about his fine rose. He stirred the ground. He put on the liquid manure. But the graft had none of it. The eglantine sent all to its own baby. Yes.

"By and by the graft, the little aristocrat, died; but the eglantine over the fence was starred all over with little roses. After a while the eglantine—the papa—died also. It had given all its food to the baby. When the gardener dug up his dead rose-bush, it was only then he knew what had happened. He found the root going to the other side of the fence; then he saw the little eglantine with its pretty roses. Then he knew why his fine rose had died."

"How did the eglantine know that the gardener could n't see its baby if it was on the other side of the fence?" asked Mary.

"That I cannot tell," said Herr Trommel. "Perhaps it did not know. But plants will take much trouble for their children."

"I 'm sorry for the graft that died," said Mary, slowly; "but I 'm glad the eglantine took care of its own baby. It does n't seem fair to make plants be what they don't want to be."

"No-o," said Mr. Trommel, doubtfully; "but it is education; it is life; it is also horticulture."

The next afternoon, when his visitors came, Mr. Trommel was down at the end of his garden, at work already on his young apple-trees.

"I brought Haddie, Mr. Trommel. Do you mind?" asked Mary. "He wanted to learn budding, too."

"Eh? What?" Herr Trommel turned and scrutinized the two. "It is a good lad. I shall not mind," he said, and turned again to his task.

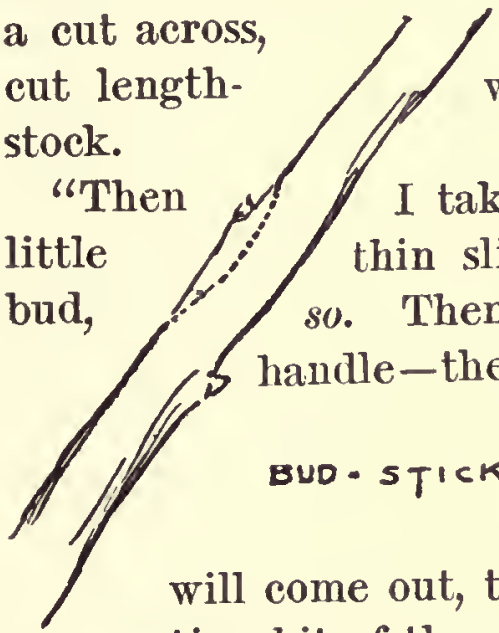
The old gardener was taking his work comfortably. He sat on a square, low bench, no higher than a hassock. "It is as well," he said to Finnan Haddie, who was looking interestedly over his shoulder, "to work in comfort as in discomfort. Yes! One must not grudge the backache for one's work—no. But if one can work as well and have no backache, it is better.

So I have the little bench. I also have the lower edges curved like a little sled. Thus I can move along without rising."

"Is that the 'bud'—that stick in your hand?" asked the boy.

"No, no! These are the 'buds'—this and this." He touched with his budding-knife the little "bumps" on the branch, as Mary called them.

"Now look! First, I find a smooth place on the stem of the tree. Then I make a cut across, *so*. Then I make another cut lengthwise, *so*. That is for the stock.



"Then I take the bud-stick and I cut a little thin slice, deepest just under the bud, *so*. Then I hold it carefully by the handle—the bud, that is—and I take out with my knife the thin piece of wood inside, very carefully, or the bud will come out, too,—yes! and I leave but a tiny bit of the wood just under the bud. It is ready.

"Now," and he turned his attention again to the

young apple-tree, "I slip the thin ivory end of my budding-knife that is made just for this—I slip it under the bark and loosen it, *so*. Then I can slip the bud in—yes. And now I tie it," he said, taking a strand of damp raffia from the bunch thrust under his apron-string, and beginning to bandage carefully. "I must cover the cut well, so that the rain shall not get in; I must also have it close around the bud, so."

"Does it stay like that all winter?" asked Finnan Haddie.

"No, no! In perhaps ten days I take the bandage off; I must not choke the little fellow—no!"

"Now you 're going to let us bud some of the trees, are n't you, Mr. Trommel?" coaxed Mary.

"What!" exclaimed Herr Trommel, turning himself around on his bench and looking rather aghast at his visitors, who had taken out expectant jack-knives. "But I wish them to grow! Am I not showing you how?"

The young gardeners looked crestfallen.

"But how can we learn, Mr. Trommel, if you won't let us do some ourselves?" asked Finnan Haddie.

Mr. Trommel fixed his spectacles on the boy. "You are right, my lad," said he, after a moment. "I tell you—go to that old tree yonder and cut some twigs like this"—and he held up one of his bud-sticks.

"Now," he said when these were brought, "these shall be your bud-sticks. You must each take one, yes! Now try if you can cut a bud well from this little branch and take out also the bit of wood inside. If you can do that well, then I shall let you cut a bud from one of my bud-sticks and put it in one of my little trees, below the bud I shall put in. Be careful that you do not cut the fingers!"

Both the young gardeners worked for a few moments in silence.

"No, no!" said Herr Trommel as Mary showed him her production; "it is haggled, it is dirty inside—you have dropped it on the ground! When you cut your hand, do you not know you must wash the sand from the cut before you stick it together with plaster? The apple-tree also does not like that it have a cut stuck together with sand inside. Let me see your knife!"

Mary held out a limp-bladed jack-knife for inspection.

Mr. Trommel grunted disapprovingly. "No won-

der you cannot cut!" He sighed deeply. "Take mine," he said resignedly; "now try again."

Mary screwed her forehead into a frown of intense effort, for Mr. Trommel's spectacles were upon her.

"Ah, that is better!" said the old gardener, approvingly; "it is not muscle, but skill and a sharp knife."

"How is that?" asked Randolph Findlayson, anxiously holding up his "bud" for Mr. Trommel's inspection.

"It is good," admitted Mr. Trommel.

"Then I can bud one of your trees?" he begged eagerly.

"Yes," said Herr Trommel, resolutely. "It would not be right that you should grow to be a man and not know budding.

"Have you found a smooth place? Yes? And below the bud I put in? That is right.

"I think if George Washington's father had but taught him to bud, he would not have lost his cherry-tree. No. For then, when the little George felt he must cut, he would have budded the cherry-tree. He would not have cut it down. No."

CHAPTER XXIV

TRANSPLANTING PERENNIALS

[Early September]

"I BREAK up some families to-morrow," remarked Mr. Trommel; "you want to see how it is done?"

"Is it insects?" asked the under-gardener, who was leaning on the fence, admiring Mr. Trommel's asters.

"No, no, it is not insects; it is—some perennials. The family has grown too large, so I must send off some of the young ones; it is my larkspurs."

"Why do you move them now?"

"It is the time."

"But why is it the time?" persisted the under-gardener.

"*Liebchen*, you will be the *savant* some day, you ask so many questions. The larkspurs have finished blooming, they have retired. If I separate them now,

they have time to make themselves at home, and they will be ready to blossom in the spring. I do the same thing now to the irises and the phloxes—the tall ones. They have finished their summer's work. I give them a change of place and send away some of the children.

"They do not like that you interfere with them early, when they are preparing for the summer; also they will not have you move them when they are blooming. So we wait until they have finished."

"I understand," said Mary; "and if I dug up my phlox and made twins of it all, would it bloom next year like yours?"

"No, no! your phlox is *Drummondi*, it is annual. Annuals are good to grow quickly—they are also good to die quickly. Me—I like the perennials better—they are like old friends who come every year."

"Perennials and annuals and all the kinds of plants used to mix me up very much, but I have them all straight now."

"Yes?" said Mr. Trommel, inquiringly. Shovel in hand, he was inspecting a clump of peonies. "Now you comprehend?"

"You see, it 's this way," explained Mary. "There 's *evergreens;* that 's very easy: they are *ever green*,

they don't change in the winter. Then comes *de-ciduous;* that 's like lots of trees and shrubs: they pay a little more attention to the winter, and drop their leaves and just go in the bare branches. Next come *perennials;* those die down until you would think they were dead, but they are n't, for the roots are alive. And then there are the *annuals;* they are all dead. The deciduous shrubs, and perennials, and annuals are just like that story of Top-off and Half-gone and All-gone."

"I have forgotten the story," said Mr. Trommel. "But that is very interesting."

"Then there 's another way to remember it. I think of the animals. A horse or a dog is like an *evergreen;* they are always around, and look about the same. And a turtle digs down into the mud and stays there all winter, and then comes out in the spring; he is a *perennial.* And the dragon-flies and

butterflies, that just live for one summer—they are *annuals.*"

"That also is very interesting," said Mr. Trommel. "But you know there are *biennials*—the plants that live two years. How can you remember those?"

"They troubled me quite a little," admitted Mary; "but I have them now. They are almost like annuals; and *a* is for *annual*, and then comes *b*—that 's for *biennials;* and *perennials* ought to be *c*, but they are n't; and then comes *d* for *deciduous*, and *e* for *evergreen.*"

"You have a fine mind, my child," said Herr Trommel; "but you know these annuals and biennials and perennials you tell me of belong to one large class,—the herbaceous,—while the deciduous and evergreen are woody plants, and you must not have them mixed."

"Oh, no; I can remember those because I learned herbivorous animals: *herbivorous* animals have n't as

sharp teeth as the *carnivorous*, and *herbaceous* are the things they can eat. A horse likes to eat the leaves of trees or bushes, and he does n't mind a few little hard twigs; he tries to eat the tree, but he can only eat a little of the bark. But he could n't eat up the whole tree. If it was *herbaceous*, he could.

"The woody things, the trees and shrubs that *are n't* herbaceous, can keep their tops up above the earth all winter; but the *herbaceous* can't. They 've only got summer dresses and not any winter ones, so all of them that are n't eaten or picked at the end of the summer get their death of cold. But the roots of some of them, if they are *perennials*, can live just as long as—as anything!"

"That is very, very enlightening," observed Herr Trommel; "but if you are not careful to be a good gardener, perhaps you will give the lectures on Nature Study when you grow up, and that would be a sad thing!"

The under-gardener looked grave. "Then perhaps we 'd better go on with the planting," said Mary, in a subdued voice.

Herr Trommel dug up a large clump of phloxes. "They do not come apart very easily," he said, feel-

ing among the roots for the plants and then pulling them apart.

"The family are very fond of each other," remarked Mary.

"Um! But it is not all affection; the roots are all trying to get something to eat for themselves. I have them apart now—one, two, three,—five roots. Now we shall have five plants where we had one. This way the garden grows itself every year, and then you have plants to give away.

"Now we divide the larkspur—the *Delphinium*."

"Why do you call larkspur *Delphinium?*" asked Mary.

"Why do we call it *Delphinium?*" repeated Herr Trommel. "Oh, because some man thought the little nectary of the flower, the little place where it keeps the sweet, looked like a dolphin."

"That is n't a very good reason," objected Mary. "It does n't look a bit like a fish. Why don't they call it something that would let you know it is such a lovely blue?"

"That I cannot tell, *Liebchen*. Flowers have suffered much at the hands of botanists. *Delphinium* is not a bad-sounding name. The pretty larkspur has not much to complain of. But I think that lovely

one, the California poppy, felt very sad the day that Herr von Eschscholtz found her and she was named *Eschscholtzia*—the poor thing! She must go always to a new home with that name fastened to her.

"This larkspur will divide into three," he continued, turning again to his work; "and we put each in a new place, and they each start a new family."

"It 's just like making colonies, is n't it?" remarked Mary.

"Yes," assented Mr. Trommel; "except that one does not have to dig up the roots of all the people in the old country to move a few to the new.

"Now we divide the irises. We cut with the spade where we cannot pull apart."

"Irises have a pretty name."

Herr Trommel nodded. "Yes; they have not suffered."

"Iris was a goddess who had lots of different-colored dresses," explained Mary. "I think she used to wear a rainbow over her shoulder."

"She might," admitted Mr. Trommel.

"And the iris is called iris because it is so beautifully shaded, the violet into the white and lavender and—What is that thing, Mr. Trommel," she broke off—"that thick root with the little roots coming from it?"

"That has another bad name, little one: it is *rhizome*. It is the place where the iris stores the food and moisture; the roots bring it there. We must give the iris plenty of room when we transplant. She is a delicate thing—a rainbow-lady, as you say; but she has the fine appetite, and she also likes much to drink."

"Are n't you going to put the rhiz—the storehouse—farther down?"

"No, no! The roots go down. The rhizome—the storehouse—stays on top. Now we have the peonies and phloxes and larkspurs settled—yes! Now I set out some young hollyhocks from my seed-bed. You have some to set out from your garden, have you not?"

"Oh, yes; mine are fine."

"And where shall you put them?" inquired Mr. Trommel of the young gardener.

"In my perennial border," answered Mary, with dignity. "I 'm going to have lots of hollyhocks next year, but I thought it would be—be pleasanter if I saw you move yours first. Then I would have experience. It 's hard to know when you 're doing it just right."

"No-o," answered the old gardener; "you must

only remember that the roots have feelings, and that the plant does not like to be disturbed when it is busy with other matters. And water well when you are transplanting. I tell you another thing, *Liebchen:* plants will take much peculiar treatment from people that love them. Ah!" he said, straightening himself, "the old Peter is tired! I shall do no more to-day. Here, little one; these are for you. That is iris and phlox and the *Delphinium* and one root of peony—there is not room for more than one in your garden."

"I 'm very, very much obliged, Mr. Trommel," said the under-gardener, gratefully. "Do you think I can plant them all right myself?"

"Why not? Are you not now an experienced gardener, and the president of the Horticultural Club that is now resting?"

CHAPTER XXV

THE FLOWER SHOW

[September]

FEW people in Brookside did not know of the Flower Show. There was a large placard on Judge Patterson's gate:

GRAND FLOWER SHOW

BY THE

HORTICULTURAL CLUB

AT THREE O'CLOCK

ADMISSION, 10 CENTS

and for a week the club had industriously sold tickets. A pasteboard box, slit invitingly, and marked, FOR PRIZES FOR THE FLOWER SHOW, was

placed where it could not be overlooked in the house of each member.

"My, my!" said Mr. Trommel, admiringly, as Mary set down her wheelbarrow just outside his gate, "what fine sunflowers!"

"Yes, and look," she said, lifting aside the sunflowers and showing long-stemmed white Comet asters, "and sweet peas, too!"

"My, my!" he repeated. "There will not be a prize left in the exhibition!"

"I think there will be," she said; "we've got lots of prizes. They are n't very big, but there are lots of them."

"And that is all you are showing?"

The under-gardener nodded. "My corn-flowers have stopped blooming; I—I forgot to cut them," she explained; "and I know Eleanor's nasturtiums are better than mine, but she has n't any sunflowers."

"That is right—you should bring but the best."

"And I cut them this morning, early. That was the best time, you said—Haddie!" she broke off suddenly, as her neighbor came out of his gate, laden with a great market-basket, "come over and show Mr. Trommel!"

"And what have you, my lad?" asked the old

man, as the second young gardener stood beside his fence.

"Asters, and squashes, and corn," answered Randolph Findlayson. "Look!" and he held up a thick, green-clad ear.

"*Prachtvoll!*" declared the old gardener. "But at thes how you should pull back the husk and the pretty silk a little, that people may see what a fine big ear is there."

"'What *big ears* you 've got!'" quoted Mary, with a laugh. "But come on now, Haddie. Don't you forget to come early, Mr. Trommel. You 're one of the judges, you know," she said, as they turned away.

The Pattersons' piazza was a very busy place, especially the broad, railed-in space at the north end which extended some twenty feet beyond the house. This was shaded by awnings, and cut off by Japanese screens from the rest of the piazza. Behind the screens there was bustling, and chatting, and running; the exhibitors were hurrying to and fro, finding water and jars for their flowers; some were already arranging them on the long, narrow table (boards on boxes). There were flowers in market-baskets, on the table, or laid in piles on chairs.

"Some of the vases will be prettier than others," complained Eleanor, "and it won't be fair!"

"Well, when I was at the Rose Show with father," said Mildred, "everything was in flat glass bottles—like they put vinegar in, only without any handle; but we can't get those," she added.

"They ought to be all alike," persisted Eleanor.

The president thought deeply for a moment. "Preserve-jars!" she exclaimed, struck by a sudden inspiration.

"We can get lots of them," cried Donald. "Come on, Buddy!"

"Nobody must help anybody, either," said Eleanor, putting her head on one side and standing back from the table to look at her nasturtiums, "because there 's a prize for the prettiest arrangement. There are lots of prizes, are n't there, Mary?"

But the president was busily arranging her sunflowers in a stone jar, and only nodded.

"There 'll be prizes for everybody!" repeated Eleanor.

"If they can get them," added Buddy, who had come back with a load of fruit-jars.

"Twenty-five cents is the first prize," said Margaret, who was dipping the jars into a pail of water; "and ten cents is the second, Eleanor, and we 've got to stay out while the judges are making up their minds."

"And we must n't put our names on the flowers till afterward," said Mary.

"Oh, they 're coming!" said Buddy Thomas, excitedly, thrusting his head from behind the screen. "The judges are here, and there 's lots of people coming up on the piazza. Donald 's down there by the gate, taking the admission. Are you ready?"

"No!" said Mary, coming out from behind the

screen. "The exhibition 's not yet open to the public," she said firmly to the relatives and friends of the Horticultural Club, who were fast assembling.

"Mr. Trommel 's in there; I saw him!" complained Margaret's little brother.

"Mr. Trommel," answered the president, with dignity, "is one of the judges to give out prizes. When the screen is pulled up the show begins."

But in a few minutes the signal was given and the screen was raised. "Now it is open!" said Mary.

Two tall jars of sunflowers stood at the entrance, each bearing the card, "Vote of Thanks." The piazza posts were trimmed with clematis and hop-vines. The long narrow table had been covered with sheets.

Jars of tall asters were along the center, each with the name of the owner attached, and on Mary's white Comet asters was the card, "First Prize." There were African marigolds, dainty sweet peas, fragrant spikes of mignonette, nasturtiums in plain glass bowls showing their delicate pale-green stems, pansies in rich colors, corn-flowers of Yale blue. At the other end of the table were the vegetables. Randolph Findlayson's corn was on a platter, garnished with flaming nasturtiums, and the firm white kernels were temptingly displayed. The card, "First Prize," was beside it.

Visitors crowded about the table, chatting and admiring, while the Horticultural Club stood within hearing of their comments and looked very pleased. Few of the guests showed any readiness to go away.

"They 're waiting until the prizes are given out," whispered Buddy Thomas to Margaret. "I 've got two second prizes anyway, and that 's as good as a first — corn and nasturtiums."

"And how did you grow such fine corn, my lad?" asked a kindly-looking old gentleman of Randolph Findlayson. "When did you plant it?"

"Twentieth of May," answered Finnan Haddie. "I dug the ground deep, and I made a furrow six

inches deep, and then I sprinkled fertilizer," he told rapidly, "and then I covered that over 'bout two inches, and then I dropped in the kernels, five to each hole; but you have to hoe it and hoe it and hoe it."

"They 're going to give out the prizes now!" whispered Finnan Haddie, turning to Mary, as he saw Judge Patterson and Mr. Trommel in earnest conversation.

"No, no! I cannot make a speech," said Herr Trommel, in a loud whisper.

"Sh-sh," said Margaret to Buddy Thomas; "the prizes are coming!"

"I have been asked to give out the prizes," said Judge Patterson, standing at the end of the long table, "but I must first say that I have never before been to such a Flower Show. It has been a most interesting exhibition, and, as a fellow-townsman, I am proud of the Horticultural Club.

"Nasturtiums, first prize, Eleanor Thomas," he read. Even Eleanor's yellow braids reflected happiness as she went up to take her envelop.

Because the prizes were many and the exhibitors were few, none were disappointed. The first prize for asters and for sweet peas went to Mary; for pansies, Donald; for the best arrangement, Mildred; for

showing of vegetables, Finnan Haddie; while Margaret won a second prize for sweet peas, and Buddy second for corn and nasturtiums.

"Hey, *Liebchen*," Mr. Trommel spoke in a loud whisper, pulling the president's sleeve as she passed him with Finnan Haddie, "*Liebchen*, tell your little Horticulturals to wait. I cannot make the speech, but I have something for them."

"What is it, Mr. Trommel?" coaxed little Eleanor, as they followed him around to a distant corner of the piazza.

He stooped over a flat wooden box.

"I have been much pleased with the little gardens and your fine Flower Show," he said, beaming on the Horticultural Club, who were squatting around the box for a better look at what might come out of it. "I think you all deserve a prize, so I have here a prize for each of you." He opened the box and began to take out the brown bulbs.

"Onions!" exclaimed Margaret, disappointedly.

"Onions, indeed!" repeated Herr Trommel, indignantly. "It is the Roman hyacinth, the lovely Paper-White narcissus, the Duc von Thol tulip, I have for you. Onions!"

"Please excuse me, Mr. Trommel," said Margaret, meekly.

He nodded. "I have these kinds because they will bloom at the same time. Yes." He counted them over. "There should be six bulbs for each; two narcissus, two hyacinth, two tulip—"

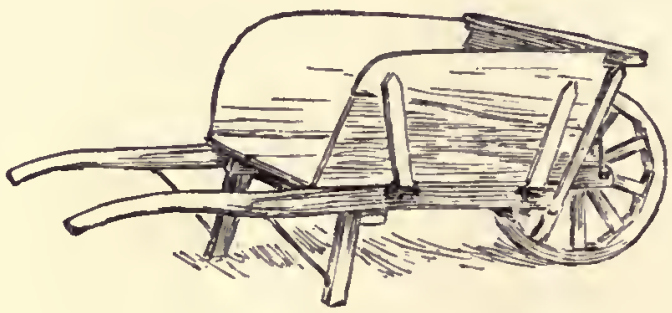
"Oh, say!" exclaimed Buddy, with enthusiasm.

"Oh, Mr. Trommel!" cried Mary.

"These will bloom at the same time, then you shall have another fine Flower Show. That is the way of an exhibition: when you have won prizes at one, you are not happy until you have had another."

"Like candy?" suggested Mary. "You always want another piece."

Herr Trommel nodded. "It is the sweet, the popular praise. A little of it is good, *Liebchen*, but remember, much may be bad for the stomach."



CHAPTER XXVI

SETTING OUT BULBS

[October]

HERR TROMMEL beamed approvingly on the freshly spaded bed in Mary's little garden. "That is right," he said. "The time to make a garden is the year before."

He looked around in silence for a moment. "But you have dug up your privet also!"

Mary nodded. "Guess what I 've done with them?" she asked with an air of importance.

Herr Trommel shook his head.

"Sold them," said Mary, impressively; "three dollars a hundred, because they are only one-year plants."

Mr. Trommel looked at her with admiration. "Are you in business already?" he asked.

"No," said the under-gardener, modestly, "not

exactly ; but father said he wanted a hedge, and I remembered you said mine would n't be any good for my garden next year, so he bought mine. And I 'm to set it out, too. I offered to dig the trench for it, but father 's going to have Quinlan dig it. I 'm to—to superintend."

"That is a fine plan," said Mr. Trommel.

"I think so," said Mary. "Father said it would look very bad if any one else superintended when there was a president of the Horticultural Club in the house."

"That is so," agreed Mr. Trommel ; "and can you set the plants straight?"

"Of course," said Mary ; "and I 'm going to put an inch of manure in the bottom of the trench and have the string stretched tight, and then," she went on breathlessly, "a little later I 'm going to mulsh the plants, so they will surely be nice."

"*Liebchen*, you speak like an experienced gardener."

Mary laughed happily. "Father was going to pay me for the job,—setting out the hedge, I mean,—but I wanted John to dig my garden for me, so I thought that would make it even. He dug mine this morning and he 's coming to dig the trench this after-

noon. You see, I have the privet heeled in," she added in her professional manner.

"I see," said Mr. Trommel.

"Guess what the Horticultural Club 's going to do next spring?" she said mysteriously.

"I could not."

"We 've decided to engage in business. We 're going to take contracts, yes, and fix up people's yards for them in the spring, like Mr. Fox does, only we would do it better."

"And would you do pruning also?"

"Oh, yes."

"It is a noble work, *Liebchen*," declared the old man, earnestly. "Then one can pass the pretty spiræas and forsythias without the bad feeling here," and he laid his hand where the apron-strings were tied in front, "to see how the poor things are choked with branches they do not want and yet have their heads cut off as a remedy."

"Haddie is going to help me set out the hedge, because I gave him some of my perennials, some of the little larkspurs and hollyhocks I grew myself. It 's nicest to give things away."

"But it is well to exchange also," said Mr. Trommel. "The lad is right.

"And the bulbs, when do you set them out?"

"Monday. Would you show me Monday after school?"

"Yes, I might come over then, but it is easy to set them out. Is all the little garden dug now?"

"Oh, no; the asters are blooming, and sweet peas a little, too. It 's just my perennial border."

+ + +

On Monday, on the way home from school, Mary stopped at Mr. Trommel's in the old fashion, for Mr. Trommel sometimes forgot his engagements.

"We 're all ready for you," she said.

"Let me see; it is the bulbs we set out," he said, rising from his work.

"Just wait till you see all I have!" said Mary.

"Have you sand in your garden?"

"No."

"Then I take a little with us."

"What for?" asked Mary.

"The bulbs hate manure; if we put a little sand around them, then they are sure not to touch it. You know where it is, *Liebchen*, and my legs are old. Go then into the greenhouse and fill a flat with sand, and then we plant the bulbs."

"There are crocuses," she confided, as they closed

Mr. Trommel's gate and then walked across the street—"two kinds of crocuses, the yellow ones and the purple, and snowdrops and tulips. I 've got tulips," she repeated, "and narcissus, besides those you gave me. You see, I wanted my garden to be just like yours. And daffodils, too!—father gave me those."

"That is very fine," said Mr. Trommel. They had come to the gate of Mary's little garden. "What shall we plant first, little one?" he asked.

"Snowdrops, because they come up first. The snowdrop's other name is *Galanthus*—I know that. Where would be the best place for them? I only have three."

Herr Trommel considered a moment. "I should put them right here in the little grass-plot," he said. "I think they like it better than in the border."

"Just dig a little hole?"

"We dig the hole and make the ground a little richer, then we put a handful of sand in, so that the manure does not touch the roots."

"Of course the snowdrop would n't like that. Is the hole deep enough?"

Herr Trommel peered down through his spectacles. "About three inches? Yes, that is right. Some

people put the snowdrop in a cold frame, but that is a wicked thing. The little lady comes up as soon as it is possible, and it is not pleasant for her to wake up and find herself in a box with lettuce seeds and other vegetables, perhaps."

"Shall we put the crocuses in the grass, too?" questioned the assistant. "Yours are in the grass."

"I think the little patches of crocus look pretty coming up in the grass. Besides, you have also the purple crocus; that is far happier in the grass. When the little crocus comes up through the ground there is nothing else in blossom. It has just the brown earth, and that does not look pretty with the pale purple cups—"

"It is n't becoming to it?" suggested Mary.

"Yes, yes, that is it."

"Won't it do any harm when we run the lawn-mower over?"

"No, no; the leaves will have withered then. These spring babies stay but a little while."

"And we plant these just the way we planted the snowdrops?"

"Just the same. The flowers might be larger if we put in more fertilizer—they like the leaf-mold; but the ground is good: it is not necessary. Size is

not everything. I like you just as well as if you were so big you could not get in my greenhouse. I would not greatly admire an anemone that was six inches across.

"We gardeners sometimes make a flower more beautiful, but sometimes we change it until the *liebe Gott* himself would hardly know which flower it was meant for. The double snowdrop! That is a wickedness. The little snowdrop is a lovely shape, and more petals put inside the little bell do not make it prettier. Double violets! That is another iniquity!"

"But they are very sweet, and they come in a lovely box," protested Mary,—"a great bunch of them tied with violet ribbon; sometimes it 's a cord —that is violet, too, with tassels on the end."

"A cord with tassels and a lovely box!" groaned Mr. Trommel. "I thought you were a gardener, *Liebchen*, and you talk like a—a young lady. Is the dear flower better for being made into a purple rosette?" he demanded. "Are the flowers happy in being taken away from their homes and packed together in a bouquet that is like a purple cauliflower, and worn by a foolish woman who is chiefly pleased in knowing how much they cost?"

But the assistant was unconvinced. "I 'd like to be grown up and wear a big bunch of violets stuck in my coat," she declared firmly.

Herr Trommel sighed. "Let us go on with the planting," he said sadly. "What have you there?"

"Narcissus and daffodils and tulips—the tulips are the scarlet ones. Narcissus is the one who was changed into a flower, is n't he?"

NARCISSUS

"Um—yes," replied Mr. Trommel. "He is the young man who looked in the glass too long."

"But it was n't glass," protested the under-gardener, who had a passion for facts. "It was a pool of water where he looked down and saw himself."

"Well," said Herr Trommel, impatiently, "and was not that all the kind of mirror they had in those days? If there had been a looking-glass in his room, you may be sure Narcissus would never have troubled himself to go to the brook. No!"

"Then he would n't have changed into a flower," said Mary.

"Perhaps not," agreed Mr. Trommel, "but un-

doubtedly he is prettier as a flower than he was as a young man; besides, there are more of him, so we cannot be sorry. Let us put these in the border."

"In a row?"

"No. I think a clump would be prettier; we have not enough to make a row — no. We make a clump of daffodils and a clump of narcissus and then a little clump of tulips. Yes."

"That would be pretty," agreed the under-gardener. "Let me make the holes. Six inches for the daffodils," and she dug busily with the trowel; "now a little sand, so the manure can't touch it—"

"Be sure you have it right side up!" put in Mr. Trommel.

"Of course," said Mary, with dignity; "the little nose—that is the top, is n't it?"

Mr. Trommel nodded.

"And if I come over to-morrow you 'll show me how to fix the bulbs so they will grow in the house?"

"Yes, yes."

"How does the bulb know when it is time to come out?"

"How does it know?" repeated Mr. Trommel.

"You must ask the *liebe Gott*, my child. Do not you awake in the morning when you have slept enough? These crocuses and daffodils we have put in the ground, they also will awake when they have slept enough."

CHAPTER XXVII

BULBS FOR THE WINDOW-GARDEN

[October]

"YOU said you would show me how to plant my bulbs, so I could have them in my window-garden, Mr. Trommel. Did you forget?"

The old gardener was standing by his potting-bench.

"No, no; this time I did not forget. I have the pots ready for you—see? Those large shallow ones."

"I can reach," she said, climbing on the bench.

"Now we put the soil in it," said she, going quickly toward the potting-bench.

"No, no! not yet. Those pots are new ones. Put them in the tub there and let them drink, else they will take the moisture from the bulbs. No, no," he repeated, as the under-gardener pushed up her sleeve, making ready to search for them in the tub; "they

have not yet their fill of water. They are thirsty, those pots. Get some sand in the flat yonder, and we mix the soil while we wait; one third sand and two thirds potting-soil," he directed.

"Why do we have more sand for bulbs than for other things?" asked Mary.

"They like it so," answered Mr. Trommel; "besides, the roots are fine and little. When you are potting, *Liebchen*, and you do not know the food a plant likes, you give more sand. If the roots are strong and heavy, like geranium roots, you give less sand. They can take big mouthfuls and have the strong digestion. But even for these the potting-soil should be rich, yet loose—it should be right."

"But how do you know?" asked Mary, in perplexity.

Mr. Trommel passed his hand through the rich, dark soil, squeezed a handful, then opened his fingers. "See, it is damp, yet it drops apart, or is about to crumble—yes. Now, if it did not, if it held together, as when you make a snowball or the mud-pies, it would be too stiff. Few plants would like it so, but for the bulbs I put yet more sand; two of sand to one of potting-soil is not too much."

"Now they have had enough drink," said Mary,

diving with bare arms into the tub and coming up again with the dripping pots.

"We must put this in the bottom," said Herr Trommel, dropping bits of broken crock into each pot; "it is for drainage and so the hole will not become tight stopped."

"But you did n't do that when we potted cuttings," objected the assistant.

"The pots were but two inches; if they are bigger they must have the bit of crock."

"We can't put the tulips in very deep."

"No; the little fellows just have their noses under the covers. Now we make a little cushion of sand."

"So he will sleep comfortably?"

"So he will sleep well," assented Mr. Trommel; "and we put the other fellows in here — two, three, four, six tulips; if we have them but two inches apart they will not crowd."

"And we cover them over up to the noses?"

"Yes, but shake it down gently; we do not pat hard."

"And now we water them; bulbs, *Liebchen*, should be kept moist but not too wet. Now they must go in the dark and go to sleep."

"Why do we have to put them to sleep?" asked Mary.

"It is this way, *Liebchen.* The pretty flower, the baby, is there in the bulb asleep. The roots, you see, have not grown. They stretch down while the baby is sleeping, when the ground on top is tight over him, before the spring and the sunshine wake him up. Then, when he wakes and comes up to reach the sunshine, the roots are ready to take care of the pretty little one and give him food; but if we bring him in the house and wake him up too soon, he has no one to take care of him."

"I understand," said Mary; "and we can't put it to sleep in the house, because the baby would wake up and then the roots can't do anything."

"Yes, that is it. You might put the pot in the cellar, or—I tell you. Dig a little trench in the corner by the fence, where the cold wind is kept off. Then you put the pot in and cover over well and mark it. In seven or eight weeks you dig it up."

"But you know, Mr. Trommel, that Captain Kidd lost his things that way," objected Mary.

"Captain Kidd did not mislay his things; he was unable to return. That is all. Besides, he did not plant tulips and narcissi. You should mark the place; and you must make the trench a foot deep and put in a layer of coal ashes."

"You said those were n't good for the plants!"

"They are for drainage and to keep out the worms—yes."

"Then we put in the pot?" said Mary.

"About level with the ground, yes; and then we fill in with earth and round it over; and when the nights grow cold and there is a crust frozen, we pile stable litter four inches deep over it—that is so it will not freeze tight. And then when it has slept—it is well to allow eight weeks—then we take it up."

"Then we put it in the window?"

"Not yet; we must not wake it suddenly. Then we put it in a room that has light and air, but no extra heat."

"Then the bulbs think the spring is coming," said Mary; "and they get ready."

"Yes; and when it has its clothes ready, then the baby comes out: when the leaves and stalks are grown, then we take it to the warm sunshine and have the flowers."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE WINDOW-GARDEN

[October]

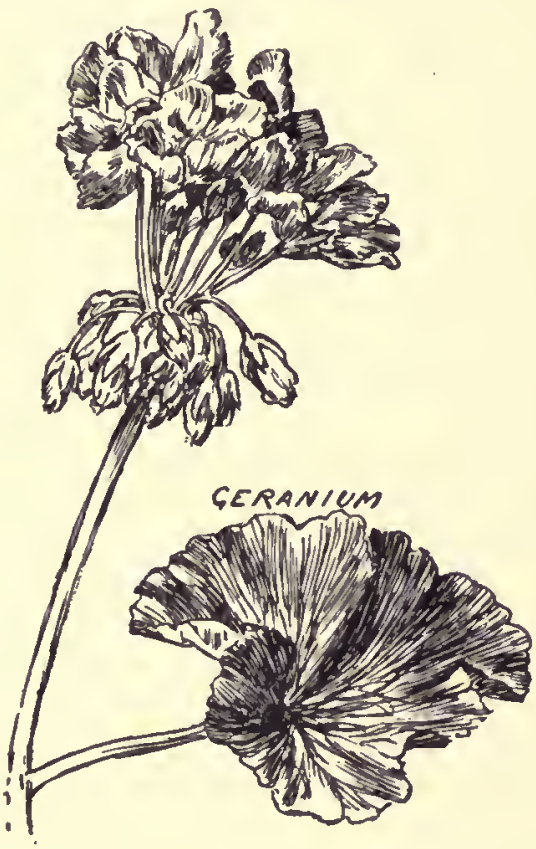
"WHAT else could I have for a window-garden, Mr. Trommel?" asked Mary.

The old man took the pipe from his mouth. "Geraniums—rubber-plant," he said indifferently; "they suffer long and are kind."

"But I want something different," objected the under-gardener; "why would n't other things grow?"

"Plants do not like it in our houses. They do not have moisture enough. The dry furnace heat troubles them. Also the insects. If you try to grow roses the red spider will find them out, also the aphis; and one aphis, *Liebchen*, can have nearly a hundred children before the warm weather begins. That is too many for a rose-bush to take care of."

"I 'm going to have father sit and smoke his cigar right alongside of them and puff the smoke on the leaves. That will keep the insects off."



"Yes, but the *Herr Papa* might grow tired, and the lady mother would not like that I teach you Bordeaux mixture and such things."

"Could n't you tell me something to keep the insects off?"

Herr Trommel thought a moment. "Can you remember a recipe, little one?"

"Of course I can—I 've been to cooking school! I know lots of them."

"Well, then, take a quarter of a pound of soap—"

"Quarter of a pound of soap," repeated Mary, dutifully.

"Cut it in nice little slices. Put it in a quart of water and let it stand on the stove until it is dissolved."

"Like you melt chocolate," said the under-gardener.

"Yes; and when it is melted, as you say, add to it five gallons of water—yes."

"That 's a lot of water," said Mary, doubtfully.

"Yes, but it is for a bath. You should dip the plants in this every week."

"And then won't the insects bother?"

"Very little. Insects, *Liebchen*, are like children that are not nice: they do not like water; even more do they dislike soap and water. But the plants like to be clean."

"But, Mr. Trommel, I have n't any inside plants."

"Well, then, if you have no house-plants, why not have a box of sand and make them yourself? Have you not made cuttings of the privet? Why should you not cut from the *Herr Papa's* bushes

and make little forsythias and hydrangeas, and what you wish—geraniums, begonias?"

"Would they grow?"

"Surely they would grow, but you should put bits of stone or crock in the bottom of the box, then a little good earth."

"What for?"

"What for? Because the little cuttings may stay in the box longer than the privets, the babies will be older and will wish for more to eat than the sand. Then the roots go down deeper and find it.

"I tell you how else you can have flowers in the winter that will not be trouble. You should go out some quite warm day in January when the buds of forsythia and jasmine, or the peach-tree or the apple, begin to swell a very little."

"As if they were just beginning to think they might perhaps come out by and by?" suggested Mary.

"Yes, that is the time. Then you should cut some branches and bring them in the house. First you put them in water in the cellar, then you put them where it is light, and after you put them in the warm sunshine; and soon you have the fine jar of lovely yellow flowers or of pink or—what you will. That, also, is easy."

"And then it will be time to plant seeds in boxes, and then we 'll dig my flower-beds. The gardening hardly stops any time, Mr. Trommel!" she said.

"No," he answered; "and when we think the plants are but sleeping, the bulbs are making their roots down there in the dark."

"And then the Mother Earth is teaching the plants how to act when they come up, so the roots will know what to eat to make all the different colors; because in the summer, when they are so busy, they might not have time. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps, *Liebchen;* we know little of what goes on down there. The Mother Earth is a very fine housekeeper; she lets nothing go to waste. The plant-children are very wise. She may save the time, as you say."

"I think so," said the under-gardener.

CHAPTER XXIX

PLANTING TREES

[November]

"HEY!" called Mr. Trommel, as he spied the president of the Horticultural Club on her way home from school. He was leaning over his gate.

The president diverted her steps at once. "Wait a minute," she called back to her companion, as she crossed the street.

"I set out two or three trees," said Mr. Trommel; "you want to see how I do it?"

"Oh, yes!" said Mary, promptly. "Can Haddie come too?"

Mr. Trommel looked across the street at the boy, and hesitated a moment. "Yes, let him come. He is a good lad."

"Come on, Haddie," she called to her waiting comrade; "we are going to plant trees!"

"I said I would show you," said Herr Trommel; "I did not say I would let you plant. First, do you know anything about trees?" and he turned his spectacles suddenly on his less frequent visitor.

There was something rather disconcerting about Herr Trommel's kindly but penetrating gaze framed in his huge glasses.

To his young friends it seemed to say: "I know all about it; now what do *you* know?"

"I know they are n't—they are n't herbaceous plants," said Randolph Findlayson, somewhat abashed.

"That is something," admitted Mr. Trommel.

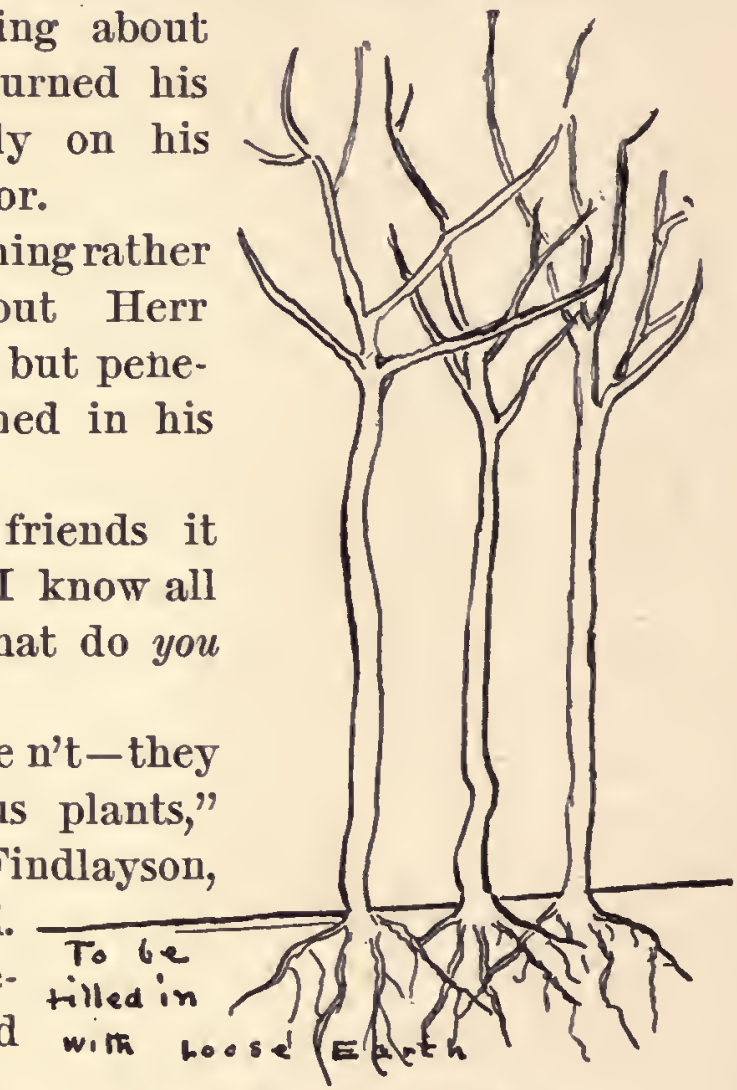


DIAGRAM SHOWING "HEELING IN"

"Tell me, my lad, what would you do if you had sent you a present of some trees? What would you do the first thing?"

The boy hesitated a moment. "I think I would take off the wrappings and look at them first."

"So would I!" Mary came to his assistance.

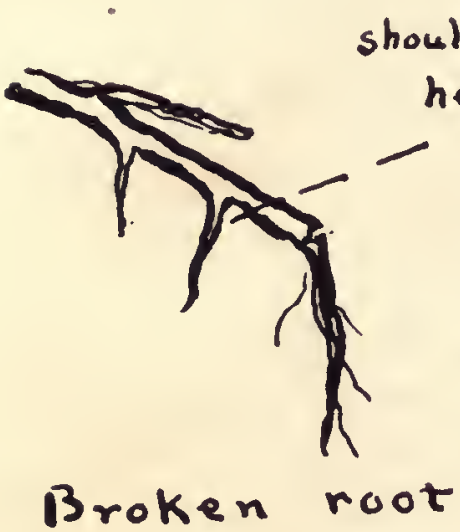
"No, no; you should first have the ground made ready for them. What? You would open them, perhaps in the sunshine, perhaps in the wind, and leave them there with the roots out and kill some fine young evergreen that has never been away from home before?"

"But you said, 'if they were a present,'" insisted Mary; "and a present is usually a s'prise, so how could you have the place ready! And then, how could you plant the trees if you did n't open the bundle? I think you are n't quite fair to Finnan Haddie!"

"Eh! What?" said the old gardener. "No, no! Any one who loved trees enough to send you them for a gift would like them well enough to send also before a little letter, that you might know they were coming. Certainly you must unpack them. But you must not unpack them in the wind nor in the sun: that would hurt the roots. It is better that they be under cover. And if they come as a surprise, as you say, then you should heel them in until you have the home ready."

"'Heel in,'" repeated Randolph Findlayson; "that is what we did to the privets when we dug a hole and put them together in a bunch and covered the roots."

"It just means," explained Mary, "that you put their feet in the ground. That 's why we call it 'heel in'; if you said 'toe in' it would do just as well, but 'toe in' has another—another—"



"Another significance?" suggested Mr Trommel.

"Yes, that 's it—another significance."

"But where are the trees?" asked Finnan Haddie.

"I have them here in the little shed at the end of the greenhouse."

"They are n't very big for trees," remarked Mary.

"No," said Herr Trommel, unconcerned. "You Americans are always for planting the big trees; we know better. Let them grow but five years and the little tree will be bigger than the bigger tree. It is better to move them young—yes."

"But *you* took the bagging off," said Mary.

"Yes, but I took it off in a cool place and not exposed, and I sprinkled the roots with water, and I put the wet hay over them again; besides, I am ready to plant."

"Now I show you what we do first"; and he sat down and took out his pruning-knife, took up one of the trees, and looked over the roots carefully. "I wish to see what those fellows who dug them—what they have done to them," he said, looking over his glasses at his two assistants. "Ha! there is a broken root."

"What do you cut it for?" asked Mary's neighbor.

"It is broken—it has to heal; we must always have a clean cut. Did I not show you when we budded the apple-trees that we must not haggle? It is a clean, straight cut that heals well. Sometimes when a larger root has been broken we cover the cut with tar, just as we put wax over the cut end when we grafted. See, I cut the root an inch above the break. Now we are ready."

"Why does the wind hurt the roots?" asked Mary.

"Perhaps it is that it dries up the moisture very quickly. If the roots liked the air, they would go

up and find it instead of going as far away from it as they can."

"I suppose they feel uncomfortable when they are out of earth—like fishes do out of water," remarked Mary.

"It might be much the same feeling."

"I see where you 're going to plant it!" cried Finnan Haddie, who had run ahead. "But what a big hole you 've made!"

"It is better too big than too little. Would you not rather be in a place that is a little big than one so small you could not stand in? If it is too large it makes no difference. If it is too little some root will be crushed.

"Now I hold the tree straight, and you, *Liebchen*, and you, my lad, fill in with fine earth. You see, I hold him so he will be just as far in the ground as he was before."

"It interferes with his breathing if he is in too deep," remarked Mary.

"Wait! Stop!" cried Herr Trommel, when the hole was about two thirds full; "now we put in water."

"Oh, yes, I know; you go turn on the faucet, Finnan Haddie," commanded Mary, "and I 'll hold

the hose. You can't leave the tree, you know," she explained to Mr. Trommel.

"Very well," agreed Herr Trommel; "but mind that you turn off the faucet when I say 'Hold!' I am not a vegetable; I do not wish my feet wet. They are fine things for holding rheumatism. Now, then—" And the hose was played into the hole with fine dexterity.

"Hold!" he cried as the water was about to overflow. "That is good. Now we let it settle."

"Why do you put the water in now when it is n't all planted?" asked the assistant, leaving his post by the faucet to take a nearer view, although Mary still held the hose.

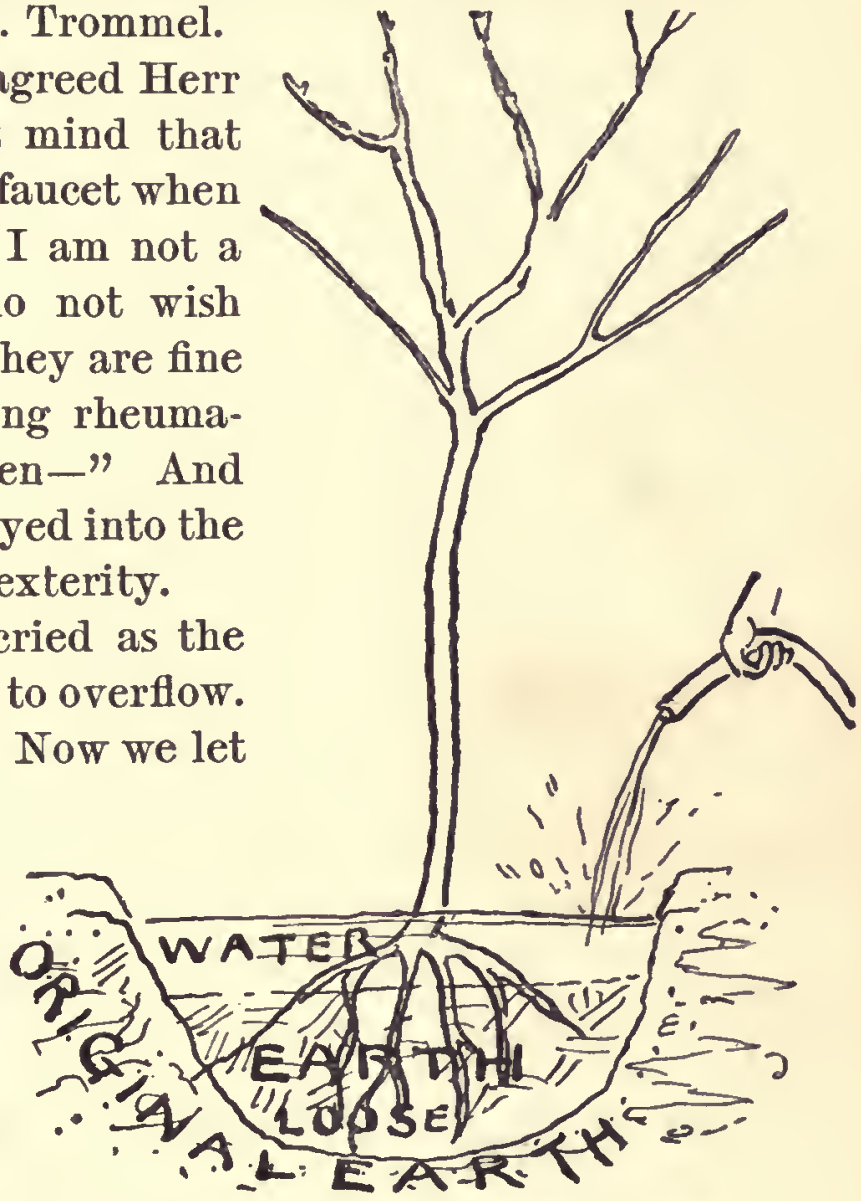


Diagram Showing How to Set Out a Tree

"Why?" repeated Herr Trommel. "Because the water will then wash the soil around the fine little roots without disturbing them. When we shovel in the earth and press down with the foot it is not so well done. The water does it better. Now we fill up to the top with earth, and then we press down firmly with the foot—so."

"Perhaps you 'd better jump on it, Haddie," suggested the president of the Horticultural Club.

"That is not necessary," said Mr. Trommel, quickly.

"It's 'most like planting roses, is n't it?" remarked Mary. "But when it 's roses, you have to put the graft under the ground. You could n't do that with this tree, because then it could n't breathe. Besides, it would look funny: the bud is 'way up there, two feet from the ground. See it, Haddie? There where there 's a kind of wiggle in the stem?"

"That is the place," assented Mr. Trommel.

"And if the suckers come out below that, you cut them off," said Randolph Findlayson, who did not wish to be thought ignorant.

"That is right," said Mr. Trommel, beaming approvingly on the boy.

"Are you going to mulsh it?" inquired Mary.

"Mulsh? Yes. I mulsh it well with stable litter

and manure. That keeps it warm, also it enriches the ground; also it keeps the frost from heaving it."

"How does the frost heave it?" asked Mary.

"*Ach!*" said Herr Trommel, impatiently, "I cannot answer everything. And if I knew everything I should be in the *Himmel* or a professor at Göttingen,—not teaching two children how to plant a tree! When it becomes cold, the Mother Earth goes to sleep; and when it becomes warmer, she stretches herself."

"Oh, I understand," said the president of the Horticultural, quickly; "she is restless and rolls over in her sleep and throws the clothes off. I do that sometimes."

"Yes, yes; that is it. It is when the days grow warm that she grows more restless; she begins to wake."

"Of course," said Mary; "it is when you are too hot that you throw the clothes off. Perhaps when the ground is frozen stiff the earth feels as if she had on very tight corsets and could n't take a good breath."

"Perhaps," admitted Mr. Trommel. "And if we have it wet in the autumn, then the soil is packed down well about the roots, and they are not hurt when—when the Mother Earth takes off her corsets;

a little coating of ice has formed about the roots and keeps them from being hurt."

"But how does the ice keep them warm?" questioned the under-gardener, in perplexity.

"Um—well, the snow keeps the ground warm; it is of the cold air that the little roots are afraid. Yes. Now, if it is dry, the soil is not so close around the roots; there is not the little coat of ice; and when the ground cracks, the cold air comes in and hurts them."

"But our club," began Mary,—"you know we 're going to fix people's grounds for them."

"Set out trees and flower-beds and those things," finished Randolph Findlayson.

"Yes, and we 'll have to do most of it in the spring. 'Most all the people we have asked say they will 'see about it in the spring,'" said Mary. "Do we set out trees the same way then?"

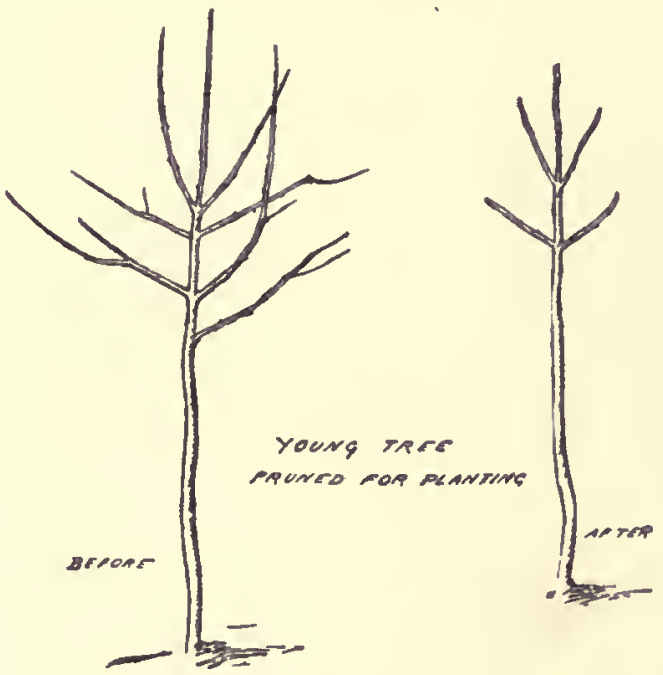
"How else should you set them out? But I tell you this, *Liebchen:* people are foolish and will get their trees late; then at the end of May you will be setting out a fine young tree already coming into leaf. Do you know what you should do then?"

The president of the Horticultural Club shook her head.

"You should take out your pruning-shears and cut, cut, cut—more than half the last year's growth."

"But what will they say?" protested Mary.

"They will say, 'Oh, oh! What are you doing? We shall have no flowers this year! We wanted it for immediate effect.'"



"And what shall I say then?" asked Mary.

"What shall you say? You will say to the foolish person, 'Then you should have planted it last year. Shall I give the little tree nervous prostration because you want immediate effect?'"

"But maybe he would n't let us go on and fix up the place," protested the other assistant.

"It is probable he would not," answered Herr Trommel, unconcerned, "but it is well to suffer in a good cause."

"But you told me we ought to prune after the shrubs had blossomed," said Mary.

"I did," said Herr Trommel, promptly.

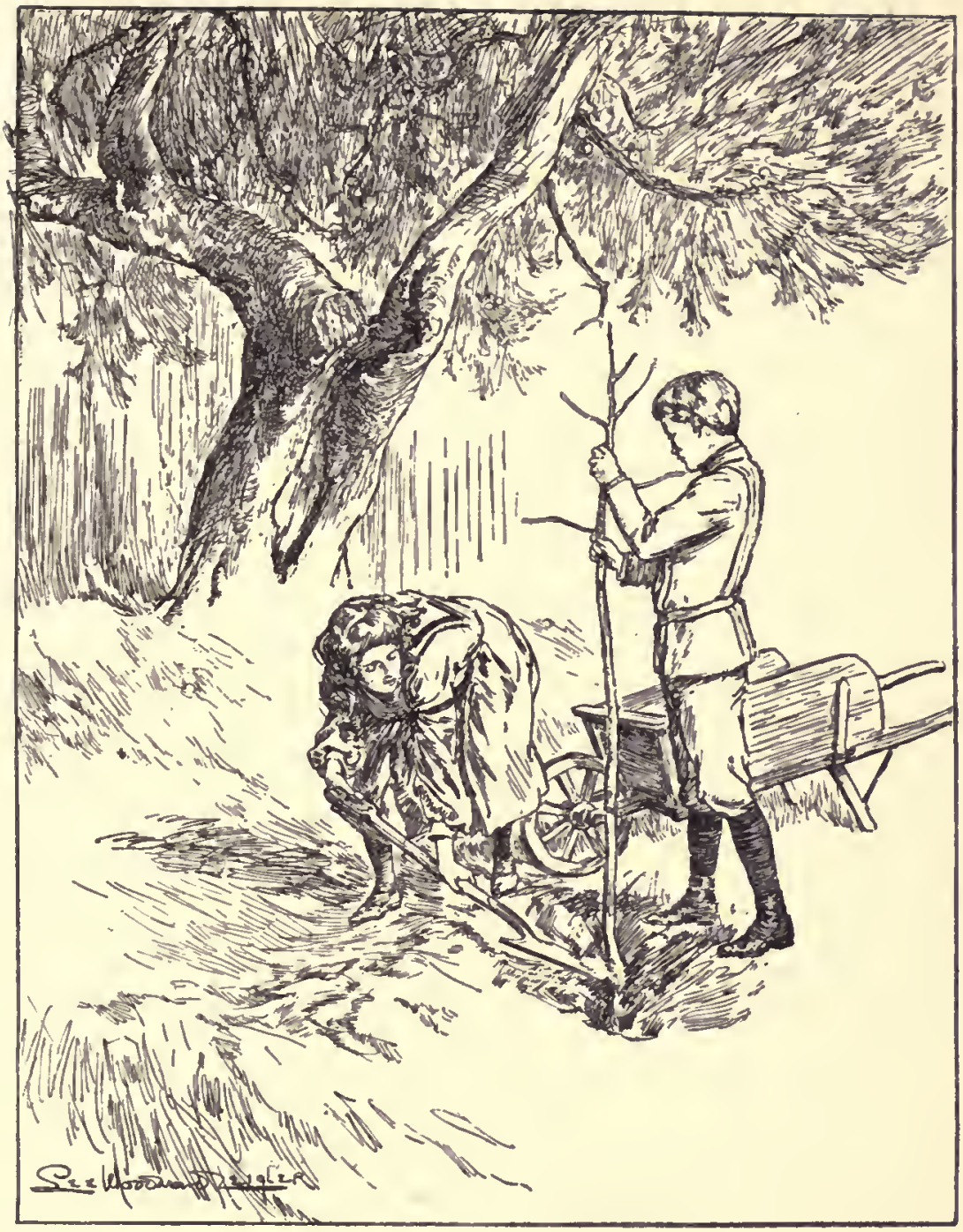
"And now you say to cut back before it blossoms," she complained.

"Yes," he repeated, unmoved. "It is not often that a rule is always so."

"Gardening is very distracting at times," sighed the president of the Horticultural Club.

"No, no! it is very simple. When it is living comfortably at home,—is 'established,' we say,—then we prune the shrub, or the tree, as I showed you; we just cut back a little and take away the pretty dresses when the shrub is done with them. Yes!

"Now, if you move a young tree when it is in leaf, that is another thing. Its plans are upset. It has all the little budding leaves to take care of, and they must have food, and yet the roots that are not at home in the new place do not yet know where to find something to eat. Now, which is better: that the little tree put out all the leaves it can, or that it first find food? The bread and butter, or to look pretty? Which should come first?" he demanded, fixing his spectacles on Randolph Findlayson, who had been listening intently.



"'THE LAD MUST HOLD IT STRAIGHT FOR YOU'"

"I should think it ought to find something to eat first," said Finnan Haddie.

Herr Trommel beamed approvingly. "That is not bad. You see, we move trees when they are asleep, and then the roots do not mind; they have plenty of time to make themselves at home. Do you know when a tree is asleep?"

"When it has n't any leaves on," answered the boy.

"That is not bad, either," said Mr. Trommel. "Come, let us plant another tree."

"You 're going to let us plant this one," said Mary, coaxingly, as they stood at the hole.

"Um—well, the lad must hold it straight for you, and I will help shovel in the soil. Rock it a little carefully from side to side, my lad, as you saw me do, so that the earth gets well under it. That is right."

"Now we put the water in," said Mary, hurrying to the faucet; "the hole 's full enough for that, is n't it?"

"Yes. Wait now until it settles," said Mr. Trommel, for his assistants were preparing to throw in the soil.

"Now we can fill in."

"And now we stamp it down," said Mary, going vigorously to work at this last process. "There, Mr. Trommel! Is n't that planted nicely?"

"It is a beautiful piece of work, my children," said the old man; "you should do a fine business next year."

CHAPTER XXX

MAKING A COMPOST HEAP

[November]

"I'M very much troubled, Mr. Trommel," said the under-gardener, coming into the greenhouse one Saturday morning.

Mr. Trommel was arranging the pots on the greenhouse bench. He looked up. "And what is the trouble, *Liebchen?* Is it something wrong that you have done, or is it something wrong you wish to do and have not done?"

The under-gardener sighed deeply. "Mother won't let me have a compost heap in the yard," she said.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Trommel, in astonishment.

"She won't," repeated Mary, sadly; "and I told her it was very important, and how good it would be

for my garden, and that you were going to show me just how it ought to be made—but she won't!" finished the president of the Horticultural Club, disconsolately.

Mr. Trommel looked grave. "And the *Herr Papa?*" he asked solicitously.

"Oh, he says just what mother says, of course. You know how it is," explained Mary. "When you want to do some things it 's better to ask your father, and when you want to do other things it 's better to ask your mother; because if your father says 'yes,' why, mother says 'very well, then,' when, if you 'd asked her first, she might have said 'no.' Perhaps I 'd better have asked father about the compost heap," sighed the president, regretfully; "but it 's too late now."

"You will be a philosopher, little one. But never mind; the lady mama is an excellent lady, but—she is not a gardener: we cannot expect that she should understand.

"I tell you," he said after a moment, looking at his assistant's clouded face; "you shall make a compost heap at the foot of my garden; there is space enough. Then, when you wish the fertilizer, you shall take it over in the little wheelbarrow. How is that?"

Mary brightened at once. "Oh, would you?"

Herr Trommel nodded. "Come, and I show you how we do it. Where is the yellow-haired lad? You better have him help you."

"Haddie? Oh, I 'll get him. But — but don't you wait, Mr. Trommel; we 'll come right down to the garden." And she was off.

Herr Trommel went to the corner of the greenhouse where his tools were kept, took up a spade and a dung-fork, then took down from its peg his thick woolen cap, settled it carefully on his head; then he opened the door.

"We beat you, Mr. Trommel!" cried Mary, as the old gardener came out of the greenhouse.

He laughed. "That is not much; you have only beaten my legs; wait until you can beat the old Peter at helping the plants to grow!"

"We 've got our shovels, Mr. Trommel," said the boy. The football season had begun, and his shock of hair shone like a yellow chrysanthemum above the scarlet sweater.

"Why do you call it a 'compost heap'?" asked Mary.

"*Liebchen*," said Mr. Trommel, "when you are in the *Himmel*, I think the *liebe Gott* will have to send

one angel who shall do nothing but answer questions for you, or you could not be happy. Why do we say 'compost heap'? Why should we not? It is different from manure; it is not earth—"

"Perhaps it 's because it is 'composed' of a good many things?" suggested Mary.

"I doubt not," agreed Herr Trommel, hastily.

"Now," he said, as they reached the end of the little garden, where a four-barred fence divided it from a bit of pasture-land, "we slip the bars out, so, and then you shall push the wheelbarrow through. That is right. You have shovels?"

"Of course," said Mary.

"Well, then, you should take up some of the turf, as if you were taking up sods. You know how that is done?"

"Oh, yes; I 've done it," said Finnan Haddie, proudly. "How many shall we get?"

"Um-m. Dig until you are tired. That should be enough. We shall not make a large heap. You need not get them very thick."

The two worked faithfully until the wheelbarrow was filled.

"Could you help us, Mr. Trommel?" appealed Mary. "The wheelbarrow 's a little heavy."

"Certainly, certainly," said he, ducking under the top rail of the fence. "You have done well. Now," he began, when the sods were safely on the garden side of the fence, "now we make the layer-cake. You see this pile of manure we have here? Yes? Well, we do thus: first a layer of manure, then a layer of sods, then another layer of manure. That is the way it is built."

"What are the sods good for?" asked Randolph Findlayson.

"When the grass becomes rotted and dead, it is good food for the plants; but we must be sure it is dead. The earth also becomes well mixed with the manure; it is then more conveniently digested. Many kinds of garden litter are of use in the compost heap. It is in a garden like the *pot-au-feu* in the kitchen."

"What is *pot-au-feu?*" asked Randolph Findlayson.

"It is the foundation of many good dishes.

"That is well done," he declared, after surveying critically the square heap.

"Looks like a funeral pyre," commented Mary, "the kind the Greeks used to have. I 've seen them lots of times in pictures. Only we ought to have

something on top for Hector or Achilles. Dido had a funeral pyre, too. She made it herself."

"And Siegfried—he had a funeral pyre," put in Randolph Findlayson.

"Siegfried was not put on a compost heap!" said Mr. Trommel, indignantly.

"Why do we pile it up this way?" asked Mary.

The old gardener sighed. "It is convenient. It is to have the ingredients well mixed, so that the Mother Nature shall cook them together. The wind and the rain and the sun—they cook it for us. Also the compost heap should be turned over at times—as you stir good things when they are cooking."

"Preserves," put in the under-gardener; "and candy; you stir candy, too, sometimes."

"Yes; well, this is preserves and candy both for

the plants. It will be beautiful when it is done—a fine velvet-brown!

"Now, *Liebchen*," he said, as the young visitors were saying good-by, "a compost heap is a fine thing; but I think you better change your shoes, perhaps, before you speak with the lady mama. The lady mama is an excellent lady, but—she is not a gardener!"

CHAPTER XXXI

PUTTING THE GARDEN TO SLEEP

[November]

"THE garden goes to sleep now for the winter," said Herr Trommel. "See, I tuck up my roses. I have left them as long as I dared, for they do not like to be under the bedclothes. This is the last one."

"Can she breathe, Mr. Trommel, through all that stuff?" asked Mary, looking aghast at the rose's "bedclothes" of straw and manure.

"No-o, but I have left perhaps a third of her top out; the rest of her is under the stable litter, but she can breathe with the stem that is out. We have to remember to take off the covering as soon as we can in the spring. She does not like to be under the bedclothes," he repeated.

"My garden 's put to sleep, too," said Mary.

"I 've pulled up all the dead flower-stalks, and the sweet peas too, and I put the dead vines on the beds to keep the perennials warmer. I mulshed them. It 's very interesting, is n't it, Mr. Trommel, the way flowers keep on being useful after they 're dead?"

"Very," said Herr Trommel.

"And I 've put the stable litter and manure over my flower-beds,—I 've mulshed them, I mean,—and it 's all put to sleep. But it does n't look very pretty," she added.

"Never mind; you must think of the roots that are safe and warm, and the brown bulbs we have in the ground, the crocuses and daffodils and tulips, and the little snowdrops, that are now seeing the Mother Earth. Did you ever hear of the little spirit that stays for a while in the garden after the flowers are gone?"

"No," said Mary, immediately interested; "tell me about him, Mr. Trommel. Is he a fairy, like Cinderella's godmother, or a genius like Aladdin's, or—?"

"No, no; it is just a little fellow that lives in the flowers—"

"Oh, I know!—like Ariel; he slept in the cowslips, Mr. Trommel.

'Where the bee sucks, there suck I,
In the cowslip's bell I lie,
There I couch when owls do fly,'"

she quoted. "Don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes; that is the kind."

"But what did he do in the garden?"

"What did he do? He would swing on the poppy buds and try to hold them down when they wished to straighten and open; and then he would perch on the stems of the little columbines and set them dancing, and perhaps he would ring chimes on the canterbury-bells; and at night—"

"At night?" asked the listener, with wide brown eyes intent on the old gardener's face.

"At night he would curl himself on the soft poppy petals, and the poppy would fold the pretty petals about him, and he would go to sleep.

"But when the flowers are gone he feels sorry; he has no playmates; he stays a little, looking for them and hoping that they will come back. We cannot see him, but we hear him talking to himself among the borders, and we feel sorry, too."

The under-gardener was silent a moment.

"Don't you know where he goes then?"

Mr. Trommel shook his head.

"I know!"

"Yes?"

"If he liked to sleep in the cowslips and the poppies, why, when the flowers are all gone he just slips down into the ground and curls up inside of the crocus bulbs—he would like the yellow crocus best. He has a very nice time in the crocus bulb, and he comes up again with the first one. He is n't afraid of the cold there, for the crocus is made out of the Nibelungen gold and little pieces of sunshine."

"I did not know about the sunshine."

"The Mother Earth ought to have plenty of it down there," answered the under-gardener, "when it just soaks into the ground all summer. Where else could she get all the yellow from for all the buttercups and dandelions and tulips? There would n't be enough of the Nibelungen gold to go around."

"Perhaps you are right," admitted Mr. Trommel.

"First will come the little snowdrop, and then the crocuses, and then the daffodils and the narcissus, and then the garden will be awake. The garden does n't really die; it just goes to sleep and then wakes up, does n't it?"

"Yes," said the old gardener; "the flowers do not change; but sometimes the plants grow large, and

then we must separate and divide them. That is what you will be doing one of these days, *Liebchen.* You will grow up and be transplanted and transported, and then you will make no more gardens with old Peter."

"No, no!" she said earnestly. "My garden 's a perennial; it will come up every year now, just like birthdays."

"Yes," answered the old man, doubtfully; "but even if you are a perennial also, it is the perennials that are taken up and transplanted."

"But I would hold on tight to the wires, like the sweet peas do when the bees come and talk to them."

The old gardener smiled. "But if it should be a very fine butterfly instead of a noisy bee, you might like to go, too?"

"Perhaps," admitted Mary, looking serious; "but I would always love the garden just the same—the butterflies do that."

"I am sure of it, *Liebchen;* and people who love their gardens—they do not forget the old gardeners, either."

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